

## **II.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

The No Action Alternative describes how federal renewable energy goals are currently being met. The No Action Alternative is used to compare the relative impacts of not approving the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) with all other action alternatives and thus assumes that renewable energy and transmission development and mitigation for such projects would occur in a pattern consistent with past and ongoing renewable energy and transmission projects on BLM lands within the planning area, based on existing land use plans. The No Action Alternative would also carry forward current planning documents, including Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land use plans (including existing amendments to those plans, such as the Record of Decisions [ROD] for the Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement [PEIS]). The No Action Alternative assumes a continuation of current renewable energy development and mitigation, and current BLM land management, and serves as a baseline for comparison of the action alternatives.

### **II.2.1 Overview of the No Action Alternative**

The following provides an overview of the No Action Alternative, which is further detailed in the subsequent sections. Under the No Action Alternative, the BLM conservation strategy for the California desert region would continue to apply as reflected in the current and existing land use plan/resource management plans (RMPs). Permitting of renewable energy and transmission development on BLM lands would occur on a project-by-project basis. Under the No Action Alternative, renewable energy and transmission development could generally occur anywhere in the planning area where suitable solar insolation, wind speed, or geothermal resources exist and where such development is not prohibited or otherwise inconsistent with existing land use plan decisions, subject to applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, and assumes that renewable energy development and transmission would generally be sited in the same regions as approved and current projects, subject to existing laws and regulations. A specific land use plan amendment would likely be necessary to site a renewable energy project under some land use plans. Further, under existing plans, a particular site may be denied. The description of the No Action Alternative characterizes existing and potential conservation in the planning area and existing and potential renewable energy and transmission development on BLM lands within the LUPA Decision Area.

Under the No Action Alternative, the BLM would not amend its existing land use plans. The No Action Alternative, as described in Section II.2.2 for BLM-administered lands, brings forward the existing management as described in the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan, Bishop RMP, and Bakersfield RMP, including applicable amendments (including the land use plan amendments from the Solar PEIS Record of Decision [ROD]), as they apply to the BLM's decision area (DRECP Plan Area and CDCA outside of the DRECP Plan Area). Only land use plan level decisions described in these plans are presented and

summarized. In the absence of specific resource decisions, management has occurred based on federal law, regulation, and BLM policy and guidance. Specific decisions in the CDCA Plan related to energy development have been limited to adoption of approximately 20 joint-use transportation and energy planning corridors for the transmission of large-scale energy loads to and through the CDCA, and classification of geothermal areas as either competitive or noncompetitive. Current BLM Land Use Plans are available online at: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/prog/planning.html>.

Table II.2-1 summarizes the No Action Alternative by components, including available development areas, existing conservation areas, existing BLM land use plan conservation designations, BLM Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) areas, and unallocated areas. Under the No Action Alternative, available development areas include the portion of the planning area where renewable energy development (i.e., solar, wind, or geothermal technologies) is not prohibited, that meets BLM policy considerations, where the particular resource criteria is met, where a further land use plan amendment may be approved, and where past and current renewable energy projects are being sited, which totals approximately 2,804,000 acres. The No Action Alternative map is provided in Figure II.2-1.

**Table II.2-1  
BLM LUPA No Action Alternative**

<b>Alternative Component</b>	<b>Acreage<sup>1, 2</sup></b>
<i>DRECP Area</i>	
Available Development Areas Under No Action <sup>3</sup>	2,804,000
Existing Conservation Areas <sup>4</sup>	3,259,000
Existing BLM Land Use Plan Conservation Designations <sup>5</sup>	2,395,000
BLM OHV Areas	417,000
BLM Open OHV Areas	235,000
Imperial Sand Dunes – including the BLM Open OHV Area	127,000
Johnson Valley OHV Shared Use Area <sup>6</sup>	54,000
Unallocated Areas <sup>7</sup>	2,032,000
<i>DRECP Area Total on BLM Lands</i>	<i>9,834,000</i>
<i>CDCA Outside the DRECP Area</i>	
Existing Conservation Areas <sup>4</sup>	629,000
Existing BLM Land Use Plan Conservation Designations <sup>5</sup>	79,000
Unallocated Areas <sup>7</sup>	377,000
<i>CDCA Outside the DRECP on BLM Lands</i>	<i>1,085,000</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,919,000</b>

**Notes:** The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the

totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore, the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

- <sup>1</sup> Table provides an overview of alternative components. Approximately 193,000 acres of existing Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) occur on BLM-administered lands in the DRECP area and 1,465,000 acres of areas managed for recreation emphasis. Approximately 94,000 acres of existing SRMAs exist outside the DRECP area in the CDCA. SRMAs and areas managed for recreation emphasis are BLM designation overlays that overlap portions of the components provided in this table.
- <sup>2</sup> Acreages reported are on BLM-administered lands only. Refinements of the land ownership base data and BLM Open OHV boundaries have resulted in minor acreage reductions in the available BLM-administered lands in the DRECP area, as reflected in the Preferred Alternative.
- <sup>3</sup> Available development areas under No Action includes the portion of the planning area where renewable energy development (i.e., solar, wind, or geothermal technologies) is not prohibited and where past and current renewable energy projects are being sited. Not all areas are available for all renewable energy technologies. The BLM Solar PEIS ROD identified approximately 737,000 acres of Solar Energy Zones (SEZs) and Variance Process Lands (VPLs) in the planning area, of which approximately 438,000 acres occur in regions where past and current renewable energy projects are being sited (BLM and DOE 2012). The Available Development Areas acreage includes 1,073,000 acres designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) that do not prohibit renewable energy development. These acres are also included in the existing BLM land use plan conservation designations.
- <sup>4</sup> BLM existing conservation areas include areas considered Legislatively and Legally Protected Areas (LLPAs) (e.g., designated Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, and National Historic Trails) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) (Mitigation Expansion Mitigation Lands). See the Glossary of Terms for more detail.
- <sup>5</sup> Existing BLM land use plan conservation designations include existing ACECs. Overlaps of existing BLM land use plan conservation designations with existing conservation areas or open OHV areas are reported as existing conservation areas or open OHV areas.
- <sup>6</sup> The Johnson Valley OHV Shared Use Area is shown here as on BLM-administered lands, but has been transferred to U.S. Department of Defense ownership.
- <sup>7</sup> A portion of the Unallocated area acreage reported here is designated as SRMA

## **II.2.2 Conservation Under the No Action Alternative**

Conservation in the LUPA Decision Area under the No Action Alternative includes conservation provided by existing conservation areas, conservation provided by existing BLM land use plan conservation designations, and existing and planned conservation resulting from project-specific mitigation used to avoid or offset the impacts of development of renewable energy and transmission development and other activities (see Figure II.2-2).

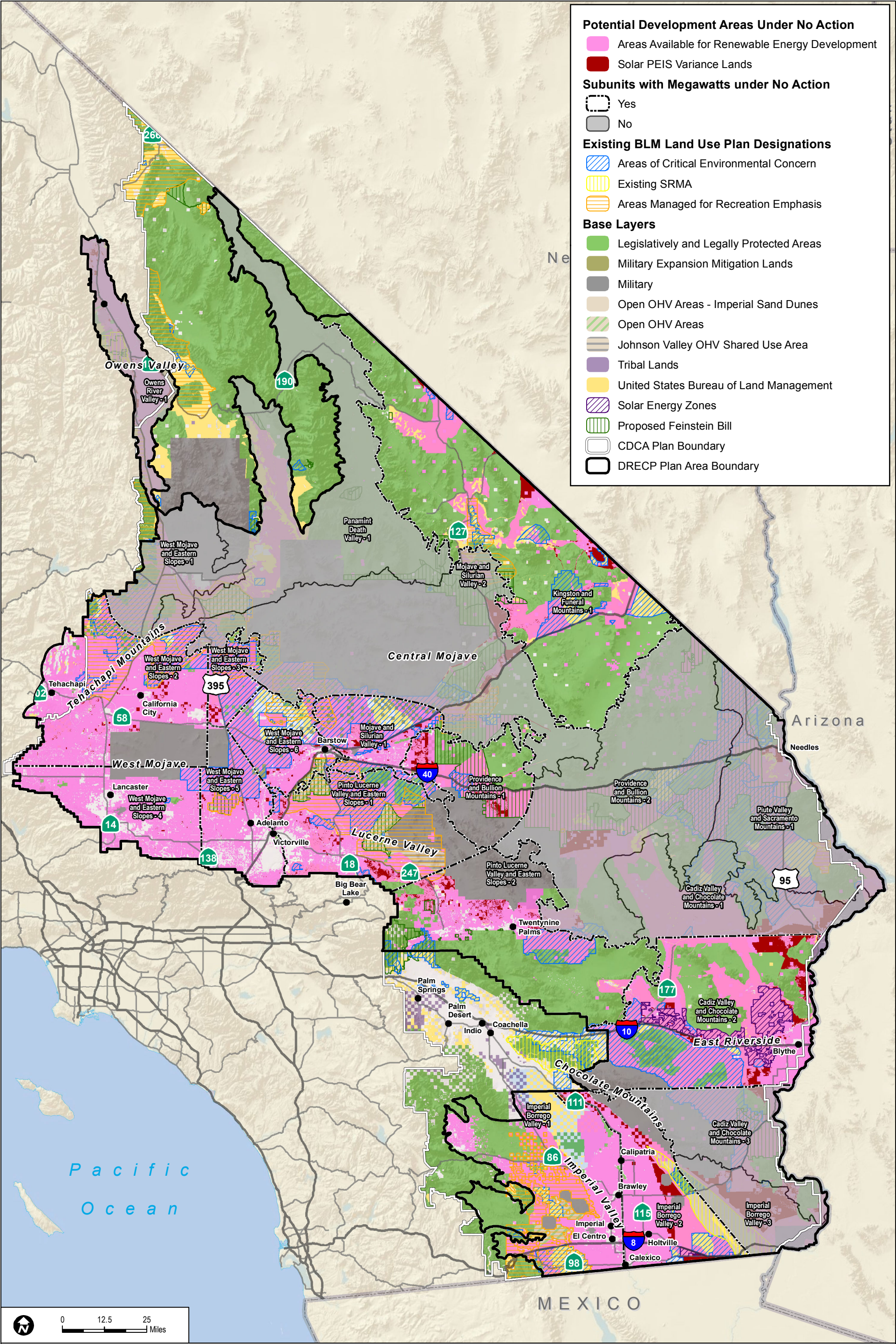
As part of the DRECP planning process described in Volume I, Chapter I.3, existing conservation areas (e.g., National Parks, Wilderness Areas) were identified as an initial step in the biological conservation planning process for the DRECP. These Legislatively and Legally Protected Areas (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) are considered existing conservation areas under the No Action Alternative. Existing BLM National Conservation Lands (as described in Section II.2.2.1.1; also referred to as National Landscape Conservation System [NLCS] lands) are included in these existing conservation areas.

Existing BLM land use plans and subsequent amendments have designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) that provide resource conservation by specifying and managing uses within each ACEC unit. The BLM land use planning process is described in Volume I, Section I.3.1. The existing management of the ACECs on BLM-administered lands under the No Action Alternative is described in Section II.2.2.1.2.

Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMAs) are included as ACECs here. Existing BLM land use plans have other designations, including wildlife allocations, Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs), Cultural Districts, eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers, grazing allotments, and lands with wilderness characteristics that, combined with the BLM multiple-use class (MUC) overlays, determine BLM land management decisions and provide for resource management in these areas; however, these designations are not specifically included as biological conservation under the No Action Alternative.

Project-specific mitigation used to offset impacts from renewable energy and transmission development projects and other activities would also provide resource conservation under the No Action Alternative. The amount, location, and resources conserved by project-specific mitigation for projects developed under the No Action Alternative would be dependent on the specifics of these projects and existing laws and regulations; therefore, this portion of conservation under the No Action Alternative has not been quantified because it's not known. However, the amount, location, and resources are generally more extensive than in the project development area and may include resources within the original project development area or remotely located.





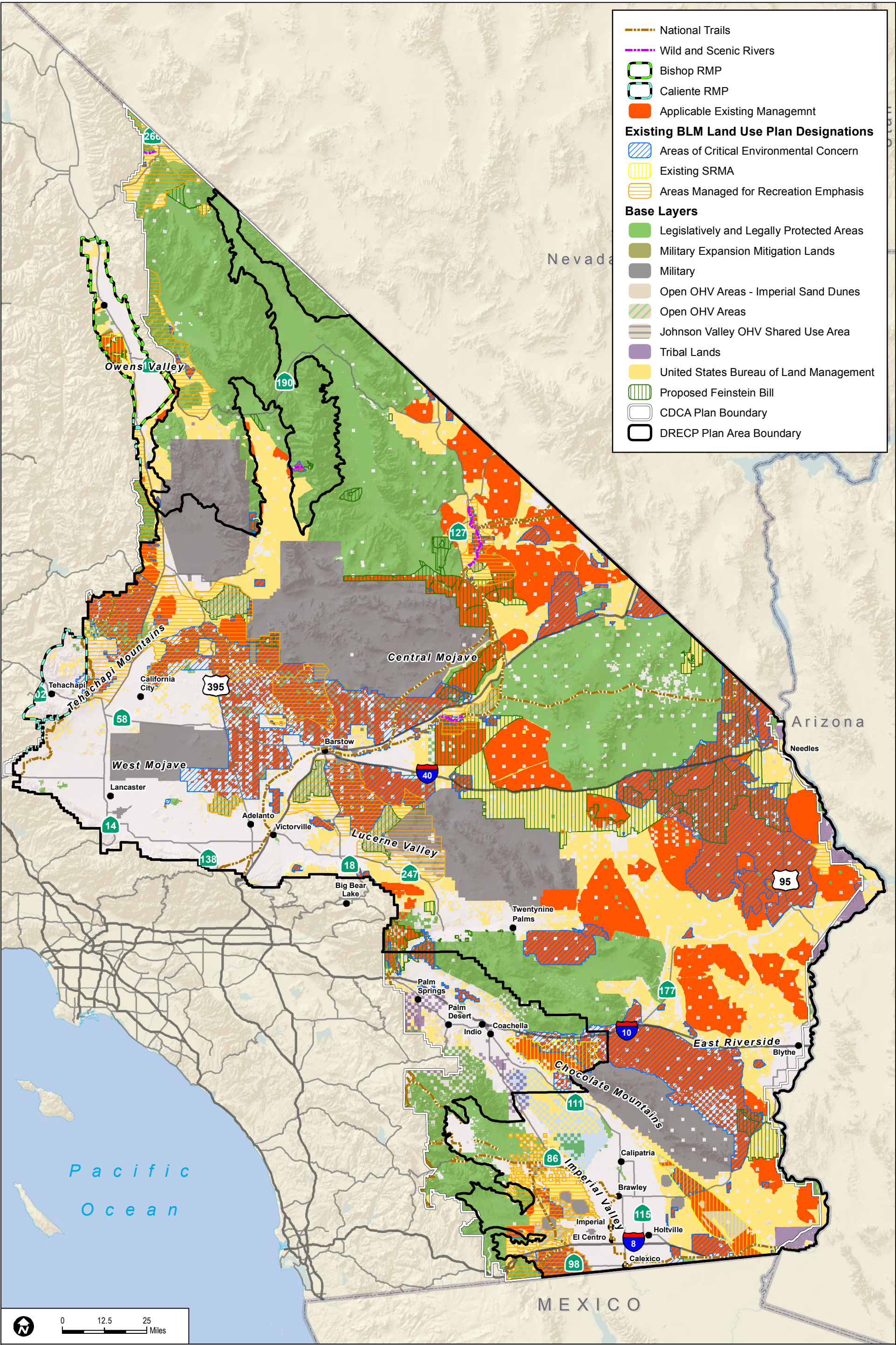
Sources: ESRI (2015); CEC (2013); BLM (2015); CDFW (2013); USFWS (2013)

FIGURE II.2-1  
Alternative No Action



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Sources: ESRI (2015); CEC (2013); BLM (2015); CDFW (2013); USFWS (2013)

**FIGURE II.2-2**  
**LUPA Decision Area and Applicable Existing Management**



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Table II.2-2a summarizes conservation by county under the No Action Alternative. Table II.2-2b summarizes conservation by ecoregion subarea under the No Action Alternative.

**Table II.2-2a**  
**Conservation Under the No Action Alternative by County**

County	Existing Conservation Areas <sup>1</sup> (acres)	Existing BLM Land Use Plan Conservation Designation <sup>2</sup> (acres)	Total Acreage
Imperial County	152,000	246,000	398,000
Inyo County	380,000	28,000	408,000
Kern County	83,000	214,000	297,000
Los Angeles County	300	1,000	2,000
Riverside County	496,000	225,000	721,000
San Bernardino County	2,148,000	1,681,000	3,829,000
San Diego County	100	—	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,259,000</b>	<b>2,395,000</b>	<b>5,655,000</b>

**Notes:** Table summarizes conservation within the DRECP area on BLM-administered lands. An additional 629,000 acres of existing conservation area and 79,000 acres of existing BLM land use plan conservation designations occur on BLM-administered lands in the CDCA outside the DRECP. Project-by-project mitigation generated from renewable energy and transmission development is not reflected in this tabular summary. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

<sup>1</sup> Existing conservation areas includes LLPAs and MEMLs.

<sup>2</sup> Existing BLM land use plan conservation designations include existing ACECs and DWMA. Overlaps of existing BLM land use plan conservation designations with existing conservation areas are reported as existing conservation areas.

**Table II.2-2b**  
**Conservation under the No Action Alternative by Ecoregion Subarea**

Ecoregion Subarea	Existing Conservation Areas <sup>1</sup> (acres)	Existing BLM Land Use Plan Conservation Designation <sup>2</sup> (acres)	Total Acreage
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	773,000	407,000	1,180,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	54,000	139,000	194,000
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	624,000	142,000	766,000
Mojave and Silurian Valley	454,000	331,000	785,000
Owens River Valley	31,000	900	32,000
Panamint Death Valley	61,000	8,000	68,000
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	170,000	227,000	397,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	390,000	373,000	763,000
Providence and Bullion Mountains	619,000	256,000	875,000

**Table II.2-2b**  
**Conservation under the No Action Alternative by Ecoregion Subarea**

<b>Ecoregion Subarea</b>	<b>Existing Conservation Areas<sup>1</sup> (acres)</b>	<b>Existing BLM Land Use Plan Conservation Designation<sup>2</sup> (acres)</b>	<b>Total Acreage</b>
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	85,000	510,000	595,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,259,000</b>	<b>2,395,000</b>	<b>5,655,000</b>

**Notes:** Table summarizes conservation within the DRECP area. An additional 629,000 acres of existing conservation area and 79,000 acres of existing BLM land use plan conservation designations occur in the CDCA outside the DRECP. Project-by-project mitigation generated from renewable energy and transmission development is not reflected in this tabular summary. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore, the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

<sup>1</sup> Existing conservation areas includes LLPAs and MEMLs.

<sup>2</sup> Existing BLM land use plan conservation designations include existing ACECs and DWMA's. Overlaps of existing BLM land use plan conservation designations with existing conservation areas are reported as existing conservation areas.

Under the No Action Alternative, numerous resource management planning documents have been prepared addressing portions of the planning area. These resource management documents are summarized in Table II.2-3. Several of these documents address management of lands considered existing protected areas, like national parks and state parks. The BLM documents relate to BLM land use planning and management on BLM-administered lands, which is more specifically described in Section II.2.2. The species-specific U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) Recovery Plans specify recovery actions for federally listed species relevant to the planning area. Additionally, several documents listed describe resource management planning on military lands.

**Table II.2-3**  
**No Action Alternative – Existing Resource Management Planning Documents**

Plan Name	Approval Year	Responsible Agency	Description of Plan
Anza-Borrego Desert State Park General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	2005	California State Parks	The objective of this general plan is to provide management guidelines that will allow for visitor use while protecting the park resources.
BLM California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan, as amended (including Solar PEIS land use plan amendments)	1980	Bureau of Land Management	This document serves as a land-use guide for management of BLM lands within the CDCA.
CDCA Amendment: BLM Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO)	2002	Bureau of Land Management	This document is a landscape-scale, multiagency planning effort that provides protection and conserves natural resources while balancing anthropogenic uses with the California portion of the Colorado/Sonoran Desert ecosystem.
CDCA Amendment: BLM Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan (NEMO)	2002	Bureau of Land Management	This document addresses threatened and endangered species conservation and recovery and adoption of public land health standards, and evaluation of segments for eligibility in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
CDCA Amendment: BLM West Mojave Plan (WEMO)	2006	Bureau of Land Management	This habitat conservation plan and federal land use plan amendment describes a strategy to conserve and protect desert tortoise ( <i>Gopherus agassizii</i> ), Mohave ground squirrel ( <i>Xerospermophilus mohavensis</i> ), and other special-status plants, animals, and vegetation types.

**Table II.2-3**  
**No Action Alternative – Existing Resource Management Planning Documents**

<b>Plan Name</b>	<b>Approval Year</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>	<b>Description of Plan</b>
CDCA Amendment: BLM Western Colorado Desert Routes of Travel Designations (WECO)	2002	Bureau of Land Management	This document specifies recreational use areas and designated routes in the western Colorado/Sonoran Desert portion of Imperial County, California
CDCA Amendment: BLM Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan (ISD RAMP)	2013	Bureau of Land Management	This document provides guidance for the conservation and management of public lands in and adjacent to the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area.
BLM: Bishop RMP	1993	Bureau of Land Management	This document serves as a land-use guide for management of BLM lands within the Bishop Field Office.
BLM: Bakersfield RMP	2014	Bureau of Land Management	This document serves as a land-use guide for management of BLM lands within the Bakersfield Field Office.
BLM ACEC and joint Sikes Act Management Plans	Multiple	Bureau of Land Management / CDFW	Management plans prepared for individual ACEC units.
China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station EIS	2004	Department of the Navy, U.S. Department of Defense	This document analyses the environmental consequences of an increase in the tempo of military and operational activities at China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station.
Death Valley General Management Plan	2002	National Park Service	This plan outlines the Death Valley National Park's overall management strategy for a 10- to 15-year period.



**Table II.2-3**  
**No Action Alternative – Existing Resource Management Planning Documents**

Plan Name	Approval Year	Responsible Agency	Description of Plan
Edwards Air Force Base Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP)	2008	U.S. Department of Defense	The goal of this INRMP is to identify regional issues of importance so as to provide a more efficient management of natural resources on a landscape basis while sustaining military readiness.
Flat-tailed Horned Lizard Rangewide Management Strategy (also includes a CDCA Amendment)	2003	Flat-tailed Horned Lizard Interagency Coordinating Committee	This document provides guidance for the conservation and management of sufficient habitat to maintain extant populations of flat-tailed horned lizards ( <i>Phrynosoma mcallii</i> ) in each of five management areas in perpetuity.
Joshua Tree National Park General Management Plan EIS	1995	National Park Service	This document includes a general management plan, development concept plans, and an EIS for Joshua Tree National Park.
Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP)	2004	USFWS; LCR MSCP Steering Committee	The goal of this document is to conserve habitat and work toward the recovery of threatened and endangered species, reduce the likelihood of additional species being listed, to accommodate present and future water and power development and provide the basis for incidental take authorizations.
Lower Colorado River Wildlife Refuges Management Plan (1994–2014)	1994	USFWS; U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	This document is primarily concerned with the management of the four national wildlife refuges along the lower Colorado River including Havasu, Bill Williams, Cibola, and Imperial national wildlife refuges.

**Table II.2-3**  
**No Action Alternative – Existing Resource Management Planning Documents**

Plan Name	Approval Year	Responsible Agency	Description of Plan
Owens Valley Land Management Plan	2010	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	The Owens Valley Land Management Plan provides management direction for resources on all City of Los Angeles-owned lands in Inyo County, California, excluding the Lower Owens River Project area.
Species Recovery Plans (USFWS)	Multiple	USFWS	These documents guide the species recovery process and measure progress towards recovery of a species.
Supplemental Final EIS, National Training Center, Fort Irwin	2006	U.S. Department of the Army	This document addresses the potential environmental impacts associated with the addition of maneuver training land at Fort Irwin.
Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center INRMP	1993	United States Marine Corps	The purpose of this INRMP was to provide information and guidance that would enhance the Natural Resources Program of the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms.

**Notes:** Only major amendments to the BLM CDCA are included in this table.

## **II.2.2.1 Ecological and Cultural Conservation and Recreation Designations**

### **II.2.2.1.1 National Conservation Lands**

The BLM currently manages approximately 3.9 million acres within the CDCA as part of the NLCS, also identified as National Conservation Lands. This includes Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), a Wild and Scenic River, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and other special areas identified through acts of Congress. Under the No Action Alternative, additional lands designated by Congress in Public Law 111-11, Additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System, as public land within the CDCA administered by BLM for conservation purposes would not be identified as National Conservation Lands or added to the NLCS by way of land use plan amendments.

#### **II.2.2.1.1.1 Wilderness**

The DRECP Plan Area contains approximately 3.6 million acres of designated wilderness within BLM-administered lands (see Table III.14-1 and Figure III.14-1 in Volume III, Chapter III.14, BLM Land Designations, Classifications, Allocations, and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics). These lands are managed under the direction of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and *BLM Manual 6340—Management of Designated Wilderness* (BLM 2012b). The BLM manages these lands to protect wilderness characteristics, including unroaded, undeveloped, natural qualities, and opportunities for primitive recreation.

Management of Wilderness Areas would remain the same under the No Action Alternative.

#### **II.2.2.1.1.2 Wilderness Study Areas**

The DRECP Plan Area contains approximately 390,000 acres of WSAs (see Table III.14-2 and Figure III.14-3 in Chapter III.14). These lands are managed under the direction of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and *BLM Manual 6330—Wilderness Study Areas* (BLM 2012c). Under that direction, the BLM manages these areas to protect wilderness values until Congress makes a final determination to either designate the area as wilderness or release it.

Management of WSAs would remain the same under the No Action Alternative.

#### **II.2.2.1.1.3 Wild and Scenic Rivers**

The Amargosa River is the only Wild and Scenic River within the DRECP Plan Area (see Figure III.14-2 in Chapter III.14). The Amargosa River has 22.7 miles within the DRECP Plan Area that are also within BLM-administered lands. The river corridor is 0.25 mile from the ordinary high water mark on either side of the channel. The Amargosa River is managed under the direction of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 and *BLM Manual*

6400—*Wild and Scenic Rivers* (BLM 2012d) to protect the “outstandingly remarkable values” for which the river was designated, the free flowing condition, and water quality.

Management of the Wild and Scenic River Corridor would remain the same under the No Action Alternative. A comprehensive river management plan is currently under development for the river corridor and will outline specific management objectives and actions to protect the free-flowing conditions, outstandingly remarkable values, and water quality. Until that time, all actions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that these values are protected or enhanced. This plan will also identify a final lateral boundary for the corridor. Until that time, an interim boundary of 0.25 mile on either side of the river (above mean high water mark) will constitute the corridor.

In addition, the Mojave River (2.9-mile segment) and Surprise Canyon Creek (5-mile segment) were found to be eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation under previous CDCA plan amendments (West Mojave Plan [WEMO] and Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan [NEMO], respectively). A suitability analysis for these segments will not be conducted in the DRECP due to the targeted nature of this plan amendment. Therefore, the eligible segments of both streams will remain under protective management under all alternatives until a suitability analysis is completed in a future planning effort. Both of these stream segments are within designated ACECs, and protective management actions are contained on the respective ACEC Special Unit Management Plan (see Afton Canyon for Mojave [Appendix L]).

#### **II.2.2.1.1.4 National Scenic and Historic Trails**

The BLM manages portions of three National Scenic and Historic Trails in the DRECP Plan Area: the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (114 miles within the DRECP Plan Area), the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail (83 miles within the DRECP Plan Area), and the Old Spanish National Historic Trail (367 miles within the DRECP Plan Area). National Scenic and Historic Trails are managed under the direction of the National Scenic and Historic Trails Act of 1968 and *BLM Manual 6250—National Scenic and Historic Trail Administration* (BLM 2012e). None of these trails have a designated trail management corridor on BLM lands, and under the No Action Alternative, none would be designated.

#### **II.2.2.1.2 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern**

There are currently 89 ACECs within the DRECP Plan Area, covering 2,395,000 acres (see Figure III.14-4 and Table III.14-3 of Chapter III.14, as well as Appendix L; nonoverlapping acres on BLM-administered lands outside other designations). This number includes DWMAAs, which are managed as ACECs under the CDCA Plan.

Management of ACECs varies on a case-by-case basis, based on individual land use plans and ACEC management plans. Acreage, land use allocations, and management actions for individual current ACECs is detailed in Appendix L.

### **II.2.2.1.3 Wildlife Allocations**

Currently the CDCA Plan recognizes over 365 species of vertebrates and thousands of invertebrate organisms in a diversity of wildlife habitats that reside within the CDCA. In order to protect unique and sensitive habitats; special-status, rare, threatened, and endangered species; and representatives of the more common desert habitats and ecosystems and the fish and wildlife resources they support, the CDCA Plan established various types of management areas. Map 3 in the CDCA Plan identifies the ACECs, HMP, road restriction areas, and the special attention areas that the CDCA Plan established. Each of these areas, along with the requirements set by the MUC that overlays the CDCA land, has specific administration requirements to manage the underlying land for wildlife resources.

Among other tools, the CDCA Plan uses designation of Special Areas (SA) to manage for wildlife. This tool highlights habitats and species known to be important for special consideration in the environmental assessment process for any kind of project.

Additionally Map 4 in the CDCA Plan identifies the geographic location that is managed for specific wildlife. Tables 2 and 3 in the CDCA Plan identify specific wildlife species in the CDCA and the number of acres that is managed for each species. Table II.2-4 includes the SAs designated in the CDCA Plan, as amended. Note that many SAs were also designated as ACECs, and therefore are not included here. Existing ACECs are discussed in Section II.2.2.1.2.

**Table II.2-4  
Management Areas for Fish and Wildlife**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Approximate Acreage</b>	<b>Special Wildlife Habitat</b>	<b>Federally Listed Species</b>	<b>State-Listed Species</b>	<b>BLM Special-Status Species</b>	<b>Other Species</b>
Cottonwood Creek	5,000	X				X
Deep Spring Valley (shadscale community and black toad)	10,000	X				X
Western Rand Mountains	23,000				X	
East Slope Inyo Mountains	64,000	X				X
Saline Valley (dunes, mesquite marsh)	9,000	X				X

**Table II.2-4  
Management Areas for Fish and Wildlife**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Approximate Acreage</b>	<b>Special Wildlife Habitat</b>	<b>Federally Listed Species</b>	<b>State-Listed Species</b>	<b>BLM Special-Status Species</b>	<b>Other Species</b>
Hunter–Cottonwood Mountains, Grapevine Canyon (bighorn sheep)	59,000					X
Lee Flat (shadscale community)	33,000	X				
Black Springs	<1,000	X				
Darwin Falls Canyon	6,000	X				X
Argus Mountains (bighorn sheep)	90,000			X		X
Argus Range (Inyo towhee)	9,000	X		X		X
Panamint Lake	4,000	X				
West Panamint Mountains Canyon	121,000	X				X
Surprise Canyon	13,000	X				X
Rose Valley (Mohave ground squirrel)	18,000			X		
East Sierra Canyons	88,000	X				X
Sand Canyon	2,000	X				X
Robber's Roost	3,000					X
Upper Amargosa River	3,000	X				
Shoshone Cave (whip-scorpion)	<1,000					X
Chicago Valley (mesquite)	10,000	X				
California Valley (mesquite)	4,000	X				
Amargosa River/Grimshaw	14,000	X		X		X
Kingston Range	64,000	X				X
Salt Creek (Dumont)	3,000	X				
Lone Tree Canyon (Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Area)	47,000			X		
Sierra-Mojave-Tehachapi Ecotone	162,000	X		X		X

**Table II.2-4  
Management Areas for Fish and Wildlife**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Approximate Acreage</b>	<b>Special Wildlife Habitat</b>	<b>Federally Listed Species</b>	<b>State-Listed Species</b>	<b>BLM Special-Status Species</b>	<b>Other Species</b>
Desert Tortoise Natural Area	26,000			X	X	
Koehn Lake	4,000	X				
Red Mountain/El Paso Mountains (raptors)	304,000					X
Western Mojave Crucial Habitat (tortoise) <sup>1</sup>	512,000	X		X	X	X
Harper Dry Lake	4,000	X				X
Superior Valley (Joshua tree woodland and Mohave ground squirrel habitat)	55,000	X		X		
Newberry Granite Mountains (raptors)	256,000					X
Ord Mountains (Jojoba habitat)	6,000	X				
Shadow Valley (tortoise)	42,000				X	
Clark Mountain	20,000	X				X
Ivanpah Valley (tortoise crucial Habitat)	38,000				X	
East Cronese Lake	8,000	X				X
Cady Mountains (bighorn sheep)	67,000					X
Afton Canyon	7,000	X				X
Pisgah lava flow	17,000	X				
Fenner/Chemeheuvi Valleys (tortoise crucial habitat)	692,000	X			X	
Stepladder Mountains (teddy bear cholla thicket)	25,000	X				
Chemehuevi Wash	333,000	X				
Whipple Mountains	55,000	X				X
Vidal Wash	77,000	X				
Bullion Mountains (bighorn sheep)	16,000					X

**Table II.2-4  
Management Areas for Fish and Wildlife**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Approximate Acreage</b>	<b>Special Wildlife Habitat</b>	<b>Federally Listed Species</b>	<b>State-Listed Species</b>	<b>BLM Special-Status Species</b>	<b>Other Species</b>
Cadiz Dunes	32,000	X				X
Whitewater Canyon	12,000	X				X
Big Morongo Canyon	4,000	X		X		X
Coachella Valley (fringe-toed lizard habitat)	4,000			X		X
Little San Bernardino Mountains(palm oasis)	<1,000	X				
Santa Rosa Mountains	196,000	X	X	X		X
Salt Creek (pupfish/rail habitat)	3,000	X	X	X		
Orocopia Mountains (bighorn sheep)	55,000					X
Granite/Palen Mountains (bighorn sheep)	67,000					X
Midland (ironwood thicket)	44,000	X				
Rice Valley Dunes	9,000	X				
McCoy Wash	20,000	X				
Chuckwalla Bench (tortoise crucial habitat)	225,000	X			X	
Chuckwalla Bench	80,000	X			X	
Chuckwalla Mountains (bighorn sheep)	63,000					X
Corn Springs	4,000	X		X		
Ford Dry Lake	6,000	X				X
Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket	3,000	X				
Milpitas Wash	125,000	X				
Palo Verde Mountains (saguaro)	2,000	X				
Picacho Land and Wildlife Management Area	86,000					X
Indian Wash	29,000	X				X
Algodones Dunes	132,000	X				X
East Mesa Flat-tailed Horned Lizard	110,000					X



**Table II.2-4  
Management Areas for Fish and Wildlife**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Approximate Acreage</b>	<b>Special Wildlife Habitat</b>	<b>Federally Listed Species</b>	<b>State-Listed Species</b>	<b>BLM Special-Status Species</b>	<b>Other Species</b>
San Sebastian Marsh/San Felipe Creek	23,000	X				X
Coyote Mountains/Davies Valley (magic gecko)	38,000			X		
Smuggler's Cave (southern chaparral)	4,000	X				X
Yuha Basin	98,000					X
Pinto Wash	5,000	X				
Soldier Pass/Piper Mountains (bighorn sheep)	72,000	X			X	X
E. Slope White Mountains (bighorn sheep)	24,000	X			X	X

**Notes:** Table updated February 1999.

<sup>1</sup> Includes Fremont/Stoddard Valleys (desert tortoise crucial habitat); Indian Wells Valley (Mohave ground squirrel habitat); Fremont Valley (Mohave ground squirrel habitat); Boron/Black Hills (Mohave ground squirrel habitat) and Western Mojave (desert saltbush community).

In addition to the Special Areas listed in Table II.2-4, the BLM has amended the CDCA Plan to include Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Management Areas, and the Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Area.

### **Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Management Areas**

The Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Management Areas were developed as part of the Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Rangewide Management Strategy (Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Interagency Coordinating Committee 2003), and total approximately 354,000 acres in California. The BLM amended the CDCA in 2004 to adopt this strategy, which included four Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Management Areas: East Mesa, West Mesa, Yuha Basin, and Borrego Badlands, and include approximately 264,000 acres of BLM-administered land.

Each Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Management Area is controlled by multiple agencies. Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Management Areas were designed to include most flat-tailed horned lizard habitat identified as key areas in previous studies. The Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Management Areas are the core areas for maintaining self-sustaining populations of flat-tailed horned lizards. The Flat-tailed Horned Lizard Rangewide Management Strategy established certain conservation measures.

## **Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Area**

The WEMO Amendment (BLM 2006) establishes an approximately 1,727,000-acre conservation area for the long-term survival and protection of the Mohave ground squirrel. This area overlaps portions of the Fremont-Kramer and Superior-Cronese DWMAs, and additional essential habitats located west and north of the two tortoise DWMAs. Approximately 1,309,000 acres of this area are managed by the BLM and are designated as a Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMAs).

## **Bishop and Bakersfield Resource Management Plans**

The Bishop RMP does not identify Wildlife Allocations.<sup>1</sup>

The Bakersfield RMP designates the Tehachapi Linkage for the preservation of the ecological connection between the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains and foothills, and the transverse ranges. This area is identified as an avoidance area for utility scale renewable energy rights-of-way, and retains all lands and interests in lands in federal ownership unless it is deemed that the lands do not contribute to a regional conservation strategy or linkage.

### ***II.2.2.1.4 Special Recreation Management Areas***

There are currently three designated SRMAs, Alabama Hills and Imperial Sand Dunes, within the DRECP Plan Area, covering 193,000 acres. Additionally, there are approximately 94,000 acres of SRMAs outside the DRECP in the CDCA. In addition, there are 30 other areas managed for recreation emphasis under the “limited” vehicle access designation within the multiple-use classes of intensive, moderate, or limited. Management of these 3 SRMAs and the 30 other areas varies on a case-by-case basis, based on the land use plan or land use plan amendment designating them, and area specific management plans. Acreage, land use allocations, MUCs, and management actions for these individual areas are detailed in Appendix L.

### ***II.2.2.1.5 Open and Limited Off-Highway Vehicle Areas***

There are currently 13 areas managed as open and limited off-highway vehicle (OHV) areas with the DRECP Plan Area. These OHV areas include lands designated in the CDCA as “open” vehicle access motorized vehicle play areas and “limited” vehicle access areas.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bishop RMP designates Yearlong Protection for endangered, threatened, candidate, and special-status plant and animal habitats and tule elk (*Cervus canadensis*) calving areas. Yearlong protection is defined as “no discretionary actions which would adversely affect target resources would be allowed.” The Bishop RMP also requires Seasonal Protection from November 1 to April 30 for mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) winter range (BLM 1993). These management prescriptions are based on the presence of species and are not specifically mapped in the plan; therefore, they are not included in Wildlife Allocations.

These 13 areas are within the MUCs I and M. Acreage, land allocations, and management actions for these 13 OHV areas are detailed in Appendix L.

### ***II.2.2.1.6 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics***

The ISD RAMP ROD identifies 42,000 acres as possessing wilderness characteristics, and includes management actions to protect some of those characteristics while also allowing OHV and other recreation opportunities. See Section II.2.2.2.12 for specific management actions on these lands.

## **II.2.2.2 Resource Management**

### ***II.2.2.2.1 Air Resources***

#### **II.2.2.2.1.1 California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

Management of Air Resources under the CDCA Plan is described on page 115 of the 1999 Reprint (Air Quality; BLM 1999) and is listed here:

- To encourage maintenance of air quality as needed for Department of Defense operations.
- To ensure that proposed major stationary sources are located at optimum locations to minimize future air quality degradation in the CDCA.
- To establish an active BLM program for cooperating with the California Air Resources Board, and all other agencies responsible for air quality in the CDCA, in the implementation of the air-quality management plan.

In summary, the management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- Manage all MUCs (C, L, M, and I) to protect their air quality and visibility in accordance with Class II objectives of Part C of the Clean Air Act Amendments unless otherwise designated another class by the State of California as a result of recommendations developed by any BLM air-quality management plan.
- Coordinate and fully support state and local government air quality planning efforts, conducting in-house planning to minimize air pollution sources on public lands, and field studies to determine impact of BLM management activities and those from outside sources on BLM lands.
- Integrate the Clean Air Act into the BLM planning efforts.
- Develop an air-quality management plan for BLM lands in the CDCA.

- Actively participate in hearings and proceedings for siting of major stationary sources in the CDCA. Minimize emissions from these sources and select a most suitable site for the overall air-quality benefit of the CDCA, if it exists.
- Actively participate in the preparation of air quality management plans developed by responsible air-management authorities in the CDCA.

#### **West Mojave Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for this resource under the WEMO.

#### **Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for this resource under the NEMO.

#### **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for this resource under the Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO).

Although air quality was not specifically addressed in the NECO, the following management actions were found to improve air quality: the Issue 2: Recovery of Desert Tortoise and to result in increased wind erosion of soils and PM<sub>10</sub> (particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter) concentrations from Issue 5: Motorized-Vehicle Access/Routes of Travel Designations/Recreation (BLM 2002b).

#### **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan and Amendment to the CDCA Plan**

The goals and objectives for Air Resources under the ISD RAMP are described on page 2-24 of the ROD (BLM 2013a), and include:

- Maintain or improve air quality as established by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and California Ambient Air Quality Standards through cooperative management of emissions with industry, the State of California, and federal agencies.
- Strive to minimize, within the scope of the BLM's authority, any emissions that may cause violations of air quality standards, add to acid rain, or degrade visibility.

In summary, the management actions contained within the ISD RAMP included:

- Comply with the applicable State of California air quality standards for all actions that will contribute to particulate matter emissions in the air as a result of actions taken.
- As needed, based on the BLM Dust Control Plan, treat the entry road to Dunebuggy Flats Campground for dust control to reduce the impact of OHV activities on air quality, as personnel and funding levels allow.
- Install air meters (numbers and locations to be determined) for ozone and PM<sub>10</sub> in the planning area, if requested by the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Implement actions to mitigate for contributions to the nonattainment due to activities in the planning area, as requested by ICAPCD, and as personnel and funding levels allow.
- Evaluate impacts of activities within the planning area to air quality nonattainment. Implement BLM Dust Control Plan to reduce the effects to air quality as required by the ICAPCD.
- Use the best available control measures. These measures may include hardening of applicable roadways, watering or applying dust suppressants to roadways, limiting vehicle speeds, or restricting vehicular access. The BLM maintains a Dust Control Plan with the ICAPCD and will use this plan to determine what best available control measures to use.

#### **II.2.2.2.1.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

The Air and Atmospheric Values decisions of the Bakersfield RMP are outlined in Section 2.1 of the Bakersfield RMP.

#### **Goal**

[AAV-G-1] Contribute to the achievement of good air quality.

#### **Objectives**

[AAV-O-1] Contribute to the attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

[AAV-O-2] Reduce emissions and the particulate level impacts from BLM management activities and BLM authorized action in accordance with State Implementation Plans (SIPs).

#### **Decisions**

[AAV-D-1] Design BLM program and management activities and authorize projects to meet air quality standards in conformance with State Implementation Plans. Reduce emissions

resulting from such actions by implementing BMPs listed in the Air Resource Management Plan (Appendix 1 of the Bakersfield Approved Resource Management Plan) and other control measures.

[AAV-D-2] Prevent BLM actions from degrading Federal Class I areas including Domeland Wilderness, San Raphael Wilderness, and Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

#### **II.2.2.2.1.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) outlined in the Bishop RMP, which provide specific guidelines for managing resources and activities throughout the field office area, include the following (BLM 1993, p. 13):

- Secure any necessary permits or clearances from state and local agencies relative to air quality requirements for projects that may impact air quality.

#### **II.2.2.2.1.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS (BLM 2012a) amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 BLM plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan and the Bishop RMP. Amendments specific to Air Resources include amending land use plans with programmatic design features that would be required for all utility-scale solar energy projects on BLM-administered land, including (p. 90):

- Early consultation with BLM regarding potential conformance to air quality and other constraints.
- Siting, designing, and constructing solar facilities to minimize impacts on air quality.
- Monitoring terms and conditions for air quality by project developer including consultation with BLM.
- For reclamation of the site, incorporating design features listed for construction.

#### **II.2.2.2.2 Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management**

##### **II.2.2.2.2.1 California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

Management for Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management under the CDCA Plan is described on page 75 (Motorized-Vehicle Access Element; BLM 1999), and includes:

- Provide for constrained motorized vehicle access in a manner that balances the needs of all desert users, private landowners and other public agencies.

- When designating or amending areas or routes for motorized vehicle access, to the degree possible, avoid adverse impacts to desert resources.
- Use maps, signs and published information to communicate the motorized vehicle access situation to desert users. Be sure all information materials are understandable and easy to follow.

In summary, the management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- Designation of all public lands in the California desert as “open,” “closed,” or “limited.” Area designations are made on a basis of multiple-use classes with exceptions set for in the CDCA Plan.
  - Open Areas: Vehicle travel is permitted anywhere in the area if the vehicle is operated responsibly in accordance with regulations and subject to permission of private land owners if applicable. This applies to (1) lands in Class I specifically designated as “open”, and (2) certain sand dunes and dry lakebeds specifically listed in the CDCA Plan.
  - Closed Areas: No vehicle travel is allowed. This applies to (1) all Wilderness Areas when established by Congress (unless exempted); (2) land in some ACECs and Special Areas where provided in their management plan; (3) certain sand dunes and dry lakebeds specifically listed in the CDCA Plan; and (4) other identified areas closed under the Interim Critical Management Plan (listed on p. 76 of CDCA Plan as amended).
  - Limited Areas: Vehicle access is allowed only on certain routes of travel. In areas of limited vehicle use, special attention will be given to identifying conflict areas, zones of route proliferation, and special sites or resources being damaged by vehicle use. Lands not specifically designated as “open” or “closed” in the CDCA are designated as “limited.” Specific limitations for designation in each of the multiple-use classes are detailed on page 77 of the CDCA Plan.
- Unless amended, stopping and parking will be limited to within 300 feet of the route.
- Unless amended, specific stopping and parking areas may be signed as open or closed to protect sensitive resources.

## **West Mojave Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The goals and objectives for Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management under the WEMO are described in Table 2-23 of the plan.<sup>2</sup> In summary, the management actions contained within the WEMO include:

- Maintaining existing route network (adopted June 30, 2003) except for minor modifications including select route closures and designation of additional open routes in several areas.
- Placing restrictions on motorized vehicles stopping/parking on public lands within and outside of DWMAs.
- Designating open routes as available for a variety of use including commercial, recreational, casual access, and noncompetitive permitted uses.
- Providing route management actions including signage on open routes and rehabilitation of closed routes.

## **Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The goals and objectives for Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management under the NEMO are described on page 2-28 (BLM 2002a).

In summary, the management actions contained within the NEMO include:

- Route designation occurs in all critical desert tortoise habitat, consistent with federal regulation and CDCA Plan guidance, based on the existing route inventory. Refer to Chapter 8, Figures 4c and d for the route inventory existing network for Alternative 1 (No Action). Routes not approved for vehicle access would, in most instances, be obliterated, barricaded, signed, or marked. Specific techniques chosen would depend on location, potential effectiveness, and sensitivity of resources and availability of manpower and funding.
- Stopping, parking and camping will be allowed within 100 feet of route centerline within proposed DWMAs.
- Navigable washes may be designated open or limited, if they are major vehicle transportation routes in DWMAs. Outside of DWMAs, washes would be designated consistent with 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) criteria and multiple-use guidelines. Parking and camping will be allowed only within the banks of the wash.

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<sup>2</sup> The West Mojave Plan CDCA Plan Amendments are currently under review for possible amendment. See Volume I, Section I.3 for an overview of the proposed amendments and their intersection with the DRECP LUPA.



## **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The goals and objectives for Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management under the NECO RMP are described on page 2-66 of the plan (BLM 2002b).

In summary, the management actions contained within the NECO include:

- BLM would require motorized-vehicle access to be managed in accordance with current MUC L guidelines, irrespective of MUC, except for MUC C (wilderness) and areas designated “open.”
- BLM would designate “existing” routes as “open” for motorized-vehicle use except for certain circumstances including where specific biological parameters minimize harassment of wildlife and significant disruption of habitats. BLM proposed route-specific designations, including maps.
- A total of 4,743 miles of unpaved routes were available for use by motorized vehicles and a total of 239 miles of routes were closed due to proximity of bat roosts, prairie falcon (*Falcon mexicanus*) or golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) eyries, or waters.
- BLM modified the “Stopping and Parking” section in the Motorized-Vehicle Access element of CDCA Plan such that stopping, parking, and vehicle camping are allowed within 300 feet from the centerline of an approved route except within sensitive areas (such as ACECs) where the limit would be 100 feet. Stopping, parking, and vehicle camping would be allowed no more than 100 feet from the centerline of a route within DWMAs.

## **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

The Imperial Sand Dunes RAMP ROD (BLM 2013a) identifies goals and objectives and management actions for Transportation and Public Access (Travel Management). The goals and objectives for Transportation and Public Access under the ISD RAMP are described on page 2-94 and page 2-101 (Routes of Travel) of the ROD, and include:

- Ensure that the BLM minimizes impacts to identified sensitive cultural, natural, biological, and visual resources.
- Ensure that the BLM continues to provide essential motorized access to nonfederal lands, prior existing rights on BLM lands, and private in-holdings surrounded by BLM lands.
- Ensure that the BLM continues to provide adequate motorized access for the maintenance of wildlife guzzlers and for dispersed recreation activities such as hunting.
- Ensure that the BLM provides for a wide variety of recreational opportunities (e.g., hiking, OHV recreation, horseback riding, and commercial activities).
- Reduce or halt the unauthorized incursions into closed areas.

In summary, the management actions contained within the ISD RAMP include:

- Designate all BLM-administered public lands within the planning area (ISD) as open, closed, or limited to motorized use (see Map 2-7 of the ISD RAMP ROD):
  - Open: 127,000 acres
  - Closed: 35,000 acres
  - Limited: 52,000 acres
- Designate routes of travel within the OHV limited use area surrounding and within the ISD SRMA. This includes open routes (routes available to motorized vehicles), limited routes (routes which may have additional limitations on use including vehicle size, vehicle type, and season of use), and closed routes (routes closed to motorized vehicles, including OHVs, but open to biking, hiking, and equestrian use). (See Map 2-8 of the ISD ROD.)
- Limit stopping, parking, and camping along the open routes in the Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Management Area to within 50 feet on either side of the route centerline.
- Maintain, and where necessary, improve Wash Road.
- Allow primary motorized vehicle travel only on designated routes. Emergency vehicles may use a drivable wash to access a site. Where no roads exist, vehicles could be authorized on a case-by-case basis to travel cross-country to avoid the need for road building, with appropriate environmental analysis.
- Ensure that designated routes within the planning area are adequately signed and mapped for public use.
- Where new roads are considered in the future, roadbeds will be no wider than needed for reliable access. Proposed new roads will be considered only after appropriate environmental analysis and will use BLM specifications and best management practices to minimize impacts to resources and reduce erosion.
- Reduce vehicle incursions or trespass on closed routes or in closed areas by restoring lands to their pre-disturbance conditions as rapidly as funding permits. Sensitive resources in immediate danger or those that have been damaged by linear disturbances will be a high priority for restoration. Typically, the restoration will be limited to that portion of the route of trespass that is in line of sight from an open route. Each route will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and the most appropriate method of restoration will be used based on geography, topography, soils, hydrology, and vegetation.

## **Western Colorado Desert Routes of Travel Designations/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The Western Colorado Desert Routes of Travel Designations (WECO) CDCA Plan Amendment does not establish any additional goals and objectives for travel management beyond the recreation goals in the CDCA Plan (BLM 2003). This plan amendment designates a route network for the WECO planning area, and describes under what situations camping and parking will be allowed.

### **II.2.2.2.2.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

Decisions on Comprehensive Trail and Travel Management are outlined in Section 2.11 of the Approved Bakersfield Resource Management Plan.

#### **Goal**

[CCTM-G-1] Improve access to, and recreational opportunities on, public lands that complement the character of each geographic zone and the surrounding regions.

#### **Objectives**

[CTTM-O-1] Provide reasonable, safe, and environmentally sound access to visitors, local residents, licensed and permitted activities, and property owners through coordination and collaboration on travel systems with other agencies, state and local governments and interested stakeholders.

[CTTM-O-2] Reduce or halt proliferation of motorized and non-motorized routes.

[CTTM-O-3] Maintain an accurate route inventory for management purposes, and for the production of both general and recreation specific Transportation Management Network maps.

[CTTM-O-4] Manage OHV use to protect environmental resources, promote public safety, and provide OHV use opportunities where appropriate. Administratively designate the specific areas on public lands on which the use of OHVs is, and is not permitted.

#### **Decisions**

[CTTM-D-1] Delineate Travel Management Areas (TMAs) and associated modes of access and travel, as follows;

- a. Primitive TMA (approximately 139,030 acres): Primarily recreational traffic, access essentially cross country, with few designated and maintained trails. Area is entirely restricted to nonmotorized and non-mechanized modes of transport. Aircraft take-off and landing, except emergency, is prohibited.

- b. Keysville TMA (approximately 10,880 acres): Primarily recreational traffic, no area-wide mode of transport restrictions, motorized and mechanized use is limited to routes designated for these uses. Over time specific routes may be redesignated to limit to specific modes of transport in order to maintain recreational opportunity and experience.
- c. Temblor TMA (approximately 22,870 acres): Primarily recreational traffic, no area-wide mode of transport restrictions, motorized and mechanized use is limited to routes designated for these uses. Permits for motorized and mechanized competitive events will not be issued. Over time specific routes may be redesignated to limit to specific modes of transport in order to maintain recreational opportunity and experience.
- d. Intensive TMA (approximately 40,030 acres): Primarily industrial/commercial traffic, all travel on designated routes. No area-wide mode of transport restrictions. Implement a program of route reduction addressing route construction, use, and abandonment (including restoration) based on a balance between industrial needs and environmental concerns.
- e. Extensive TMA (approximately 195,740 acres): General traffic from multiple uses, motorized and mechanized use limited to routes designated for these uses. No area-wide mode of transport restrictions.

[CTTM-D-2] Designate all public lands in accordance with 43 CFR 8342 as either open, limited, or closed to off-road vehicles, as defined in 43 CFR 8340.0-5(f), (g), and (h). All lands within the DRECP LUPA Decision Area are designated as Limited.

All designations are based on the protection of the resources of the public lands, the promotion of the safety of all the users of the public lands, and the minimization of conflicts among various uses of the public lands; and in accordance with the criteria listed in CTTM-D-5.

[CTTM-D-3] Close areas where off-highway vehicles are causing or will cause unacceptable adverse effects upon soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, historical resources, threatened or endangered species, wilderness suitability, other authorized uses, or other resources to the type(s) of vehicle causing the adverse effect until the adverse effects are eliminated and measures implemented to prevent recurrence.

[CTTM-D-4] Define primary route designations and limitations as follows:

- a. Motorized: a route allowing all modes of transport, motorized vehicles including, standard (street legal) passenger vehicles and OHVs (motorcycles, ATVs, jeeps, and

specialized vehicles etc.). All other modes of transport may use these routes unless restricted by a secondary designation.

- b. Non-motorized: a route allowing modes of transport that are not motor driven (regardless of motor type e.g., gas, diesel, electric). Allowable modes of transport include, moving by foot, stock or pack animal, non-motorized boat (kayak, raft etc.), or mechanical vehicle such as a bicycle.
- c. Non-mechanized: a route allowing only travel by natural means, such as by foot, stock or pack animal, except for approved, non-motorized access devices covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- d. Transportation Linear Disturbance: prohibiting all types and modes of transport (including all public, authorized and administrative uses); these linear travel features can be decommissioned and restored. This does not impact some modes of transport's ability to legally travel crosscountry.

[CTTM-D-5] Apply and document the application of the following criteria in route designation including the criteria defined in 43 CFR 8342.1;

- a. [Designated] trails shall be located in a manner to minimize impacts to physical resources (soils, watershed, vegetation, air, and other resources) and to prevent impairment of wilderness suitability;
- b. [Designated] trails shall be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats. Special attention will be given to protect endangered or threatened species and their habitats; and
- c. [Designated] trails shall be located to minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreation uses.
- d. [Designated] areas and trails shall not be located in officially designated wilderness areas or primitive areas. Areas and trails shall be located in natural areas only if the authorized officer determines that off-road vehicle use in such locations will not adversely affect their natural, aesthetic, scenic or other values for which the areas are established.

[CTTM-D-6] Consider, and document the application of, in addition to the previously identified criteria, the following in all route designations (including re-designations);

- a. Environmental conditions, such as: soil stability, important wildlife habitat, special status species habitat, proximity to riparian areas or 303(d) streams, and visual resources.

- b. User conflicts, such as: motorized versus non-motorized and motorized or mechanized versus non-mechanized. Such conflicts must be actual conflicts, rather than perceived conflicts, and appropriately documented.
- c. Administrative purposes, such as: wildland fire suppression activities, safety, and resource management and permitted activities.
- d. Public purposes, such as: accessing public or private land, destinations for specific activities, and types of desired use (motorized, mechanized, non-motorized, or non-mechanized).
- e. Route, mode-of-transport and size limitations, such as: > 50-inch wheel base (full size vehicles), < 50-inch wheel base (all-terrain vehicles), single-track vehicles (motorcycles or mountain bikes), and equestrian or pedestrian only trails.

[CTTM-D-7] Apply and document the application of the following principles when making route designation modifications:

- a. Require the opportunity for public involvement throughout the travel management process ;
- b. Coordinate route designations with individual stakeholders, user groups, tribes, agencies and local governments;
- c. Document and record route designation changes appropriately; and
- d. Provide opportunity for public review and comment on route designation changes.

[CTTM-D-8] Implement the following guidelines for management and maintenance of the travel network:

- a. Designate routes within newly acquired properties, rights-of-way, and easements at the time of, and in conjunction with, the acquisition;
- b. Provide designations for newly constructed, modified, or realigned routes and routes missed by the 2009 Digital Inventory.
- c. Designate routes associated with new authorizations in conjunction with the normal application process and approval. As existing authorizations are renewed, their designation may be altered accordingly. These redesignations would be documented in the associated NEPA documentation, and amended in the route database and GIS. Information on new and redesignations will be available to the public;
- d. Address route redesignations as physical route conditions change (erosion, washout, etc.);
- e. Allow for the redesignation of routes as a result of specific requests, subject to site specific analysis (NEPA) and appropriate public involvement; and

- f. Encourage authorized users to evaluate their transportation network needs and submit a transportation plan to address those needs at an appropriate scale (e.g. Oil Field, lease, portion of lease, etc.).

[CTTM-D-9] Establish protocols to effectively monitor and gather data on route usage, route condition, and noncompliance with designations. These protocols include:

- a. Identification of high traffic routes and areas;
- b. Annual monitoring of a random selection of routes to gauge effectiveness of travel management decisions and identify resource conflicts; and
- c. Annual review of a minimum of 10% of designated routes, and appropriate updates to the existing route inventory.

#### **II.2.2.2.2.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

The Bishop RMP ROD SOPs for Recreation include the following (BLM 1993, p. 14):

- All BLM land will be designated as closed, limited, or open to OHV use. (See page 17 of the Bishop RMP.)
- OHV use will be monitored throughout the resource area. Monitoring efforts will be concentrated in ACECs, WSAs, other specially designated areas, and areas incurring resource impacts. Mitigation, where needed, will be applied to eliminate or reduce resource problems caused by OHV use.
- Some seasonal closures will be designated in the resource area in OHV management plans. Snowmobile use will be limited to designated areas and routes.

#### **II.2.2.2.2.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The ROD for the Solar PEIS (BLM 2012a) amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP. The Solar PEIS ROD does not contain programmatic design features specifically addressing comprehensive trails and travel management (BLM 2012a).

### **II.2.2.2.3     *Cultural Resources and Tribal Interest***

#### **II.2.2.2.3.1     California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

The goals and objectives for Cultural Resources under the CDCA Plan are described on page 22 (Cultural Resource Element; BLM 1999) and include:

- Broaden the archaeological and historical knowledge of the CDCA through continuing inventory efforts and the use of existing data. Continue the effort to identify the full array of the CDCA's cultural resources.
- Preserve and protect representative sample of the full array of the CDCA's cultural resources.
- Ensure that cultural resources are given full consideration in land use planning and management decisions, and ensure that BLM authorized actions avoid inadvertent impacts.
- Ensure proper data recovery of significant (National Register quality) cultural resources where adverse impacts can be avoided.

In summary, the applicable Cultural Resource Element management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- Recognition of 47 ACECs and other special systems designations that recognize prehistoric and historic resources.
- Preservation and Protection through a variety of management tools, including Cultural Resources Management Plans, environmental awareness/education, surveillance, stabilization, restoration, and road designation.
- Monitoring of resource locations to determine types and extent of impacts on archaeological sites caused by multiple-use class designation as well as impacts from consumptive uses and natural processes.
- Inventory of more portions of the CDCA to improve knowledge and management of the cultural resources in the desert.
- Mitigation Plans when resources cannot be protected and/or preserved. Plans will detail steps necessary to recover the resources and otherwise ameliorate the impacts. A list of priority areas for cultural resource mitigation planning is presented in Appendix VII to the proposed CDCA Plan (October 1980).
- Encouragement and support of archaeological, ethnographic, and historical research especially in high-impact risk areas, as in MUCs M and I.



- Review of prehistoric and historic undertakings and report and coordination with the California State Historic Preservation Office and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.
- Within all MUCs, archaeological values will be preserved and protected. Procedures described in 36 CFR 800 will be followed as described in BLM's National Programmatic Agreement and State Protocol. The goals and objectives for Tribal Interests under the CDCA Plan are described on page 26 (Native American Element), and include:
  - Identify Native American values through regular contact and consultation with tribal entities and/or individuals, consistent with policy.
  - Give full consideration to Native American values in land use planning and management decisions, consistent with statute, regulation and policy.
  - Manage and protect Native American values wherever prudent and feasible.

In summary, the Native American Element management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- Management, protection, and enhancement of Native American cultural values and the resources with which they are associated. Components of the MUC guidelines, plan guidelines, and other plan elements incorporate Native American concerns.
- ACECs provide a tool for dealing specifically with sensitive resources of Native American value that are exposed to a high risk adverse impact.
- For all MUCs, Native American cultural and religious values will be preserved where relevant and protected where applicable. Native American group(s) shall be consulted.

#### **West Mojave Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for this resource under the WEMO.

#### **Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for this resource under the NEMO.

#### **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The NECO RMP does not include goals and objectives for Cultural Resources.

The management actions for cultural resources include (BLM 2002b):

- BLM proposed an amendment to the CDCA Programmatic Agreement between BLM and California State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) to formalize implementation of a phased cultural resource strategy for routes of travel. Specifically the amendment would:
  - Define the nature of undertaking and level of effort necessary to address effects on historic and cultural resources.
  - Allow designation of routes to proceed.
  - Provide phased identification and evaluation of historical and cultural sites over a specified period of time in consultation with SHPO, interested persons, and tribal entities.
  - Provide remedies (route closure, mitigation) when eligible historical and cultural resources would be affected.

### **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

The goals and objectives for Cultural Resources and Tribal Interest under the ISD RAMP are described on page 2-54 of the ROD (BLM 2013a):

In summary, the management actions contained within the ISD RAMP include:

- Current legal, regulatory, and policy direction concerning cultural resources exists to protect and preserve these national heritage assets, as well as support development of literature, interpretive sites, and other forms of public education designed to increase knowledge, understanding, and enjoyment of these irreplaceable resources. Legal protection, physical preservation and restoration, documentation, and access by scientists and the general public are regulated by federal law. The electronic management and archiving of cultural data are vital to the management of these resources. The management actions presented here are a result of the need to update the existing plan and incorporate current legislation and policy direction for the management of cultural resources.
- Maintain current cultural resource data in a GIS [geographic information system] format and increase knowledge of cultural resources within the planning area through proactive surveys. The inventory will include a prioritized list (high/medium/low sensitivity) of areas for future inventory—based on sensitivity and the likelihood of significant, unrecorded sites. Inventory strategies for unsurveyed areas will be continually refined.
- Work cooperatively with the California SHPO on data sharing and information management, and the promotion and enhancement of public education, including

Archaeological Awareness Week/Historic Preservation Month, outreach, and stewardship programs.

- Provide for and/or increase interpretive educational opportunities at selected cultural and historic sites, including the Plank Road (CA-IMP-4764H). Work with communities, Tribes, interested individuals, and other agencies to enhance public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of cultural resources.
- Implement protection measures to stop, limit, or repair damage to sites that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. A variety of protection measures, described in BLM Manual 8140, may be used to protect the integrity of sites at risk and will include signing, fencing or barriers, trash removal, erosion control, backfilling, repairing, shoring up or stabilizing structures, restricting uses and access, and closures. Where feasible, acquire non-BLM-administered properties within the planning area that contain significant cultural resources including, but not limited to, those properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Manage spiritually significant and traditional cultural properties in consultation with Native American Tribes, accommodate Tribal access to spiritually significant and traditional cultural properties, and prevent physical damage or intrusions that might impede their use by religious practitioners (pursuant to Executive Order 13007 and American Indian Religious Freedom Act [42 U.S.C. 1996]). The locations of spiritually significant and traditional cultural properties and other places of traditional or religious importance to Native American Tribes will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law.
- Coordinate with Native Americans to manage harvesting areas for the collection of medicinal herbs, ceremonial herbs, other vegetation, and/or minerals for traditional or ceremonial use (see Section 2.12.4—Vegetative Use Authorization and Appendix G of the ISD RAMP for more information).
- Evaluate and allocate cultural properties (including cultural landscapes) to one of six uses as outlined in BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) and BLM-IB No. 2002-101—Cultural Resource Considerations in Resource Management Plans.

#### **II.2.2.2.3.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

The Bakersfield RMP identifies the following land use plan decisions for the management of Cultural Resources in Section 2.4.

#### **Goals**

[CR-G-1] Identify, preserve, and protect significant cultural resources and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations (FLPMA, Section 103 (c), 201(a) and (c); National Historic Preservation Act, Section 110(a); Archaeological Resources Protection Act, Section 14(a).

[CR-G-2] Seek to reduce imminent threats and resolve potential conflicts from natural or human-caused deterioration, or potential conflict with other resource uses (FLPMA Sec. 103(c), NHPA 106, 110 (a) (2)) by ensuring that all authorizations for land use and resource use will comply with the NHPA Section 106.

[CR-G-3] Continue to provide Native Americans' access to public lands to conduct traditional cultural and religious practices.

## **Objectives**

[CR-O-1] Manage evaluated cultural resources and those projected to occur within the decision area within one of six cultural use allocations: scientific use; conserve for future use; traditional use; public use; experimental use; or discharged from use, according to current BLM guidance (e.g., regulations, BLM policy, Manual sections 8100, and National and State Agreements).

[CR-O-2] Design BLM actions and authorizations to minimize impacts on cultural resources including places of traditional cultural and religious importance to Native Americans.

[CR-O-3] Identify places of religious and cultural importance to Native Americans and facilitate access to these locations for traditional use.

## **Decisions**

[CR-D-1] Allocate evaluated cultural resources within the decision area as "scientific use" for study, determination of eligibility and appropriate recordation, pending assignment to another use category, with the exception of the following:

- a. Allocate the Huasna Peak as Traditional Use.
- b. Allocate the Keysville historic sites of Walker Cabin, Keyes Mine, and Keyes Cemetery as Conserve for Future Use, until such time as stabilization and restoration work allows for public use.
- c. Allocate the Piedras Blancas Light Station ONA as Public Use.
- d. Allocate all rock art sites, known and projected to occur, as Conserve for Future Use.
- e. Allocate the Walker Pass NHL as Public Use.

[CR-D-2] Eliminate, relocate, or redesign uses following site specific NEPA that may result or have resulted in impacts on significant cultural resources including places of traditional cultural and religious importance to Native Americans.

[CR-D-3] Restore or stabilize cultural resources when they are damaged or deteriorating to the extent possible.

[CR-D-4] Identify lands containing significant cultural resources as open to fluid mineral leasing unless otherwise closed, subject to major constraints as described in the Controlled Surface Use (CSU) – Known Cultural Resources stipulation (see MM-D-1.1.14).

[CR-D-5] Establish, in accordance with 43 CFR 3809.31, the following Cultural Resource sites (1,170 acres) as special areas requiring a 15 day notification be given to the BLM prior to beginning any activity under the mining laws including; Casual Use, to allow the BLM to determine whether a notice or plan of operations must be submitted; Granite Cave, Huasna Peak, and South Lake Cultural Area.

#### **II.2.2.2.3.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

The Bishop RMP ROD identifies the following laws and policies that guide planning and implementation of the RMP (BLM 1993, p. 9):

- The BLM will comply with the provisions of Sections 106 and 110 of the Historic Preservation Act including consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for actions which may affect prehistoric and historic properties.
- The BLM will consult with local Indian communities to identify their concerns when projects might affect them. These concerns will be considered in the decision making process.

The Bishop RMP also includes the area-wide decision (p. 22):

- Manage cultural resources for information potential by initiating data recovery at threatened sites.

#### **II.2.2.2.3.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP (BLM 2012a). Amendments to the CDCA specific to Cultural Resources include amending land use plans with programmatic design features that would be required for all utility-scale solar energy projects on BLM-administered land including (p. 110):

- Exclusions under the BLM's Solar Energy Program include traditional cultural properties and Native American sacred sites as identified through consultation with tribes and recognized by the BLM.

- Early consultation with BLM regarding identifying and minimizing cultural resources and BLM consultation with federal, tribal, state, and local agencies.
- Siting, designing, and constructing solar facilities to minimize impacts on cultural resources including encouraging use of previously disturbed lands.
- Monitoring terms and conditions for cultural resources by project developer including consultation with BLM.
- Prior to reclamation, BLM may require additional planning for treatment of historic properties.
- Notifications of BLM prior to demolition or substantial alteration of any building or structure.
- Soil-disturbing reclamation and decommissioning activities will be limited to previously disturbed areas.
- California SEZ-specific design features for cultural resources and tribal concerns.

Amendments to the CDCA specific to Native American concerns include amending land use plans with programmatic design features that would be required for all utility-scale solar energy projects on BLM-administered land including (p. 114):

- Early consultation with federally recognized tribes to identify issues and areas of concern regarding proposed solar energy projects.
- Training of personnel whose activities could affect issues and areas of concern to federally recognized tribes.
- Ongoing consultation with tribes during life of the project.
- Returning the site to its pre-construction condition.

#### **II.2.2.2.4    *Paleontology***

##### **II.2.2.2.4.1    California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

The goals and objectives for Paleontology under the CDCA Plan are described on page 22 (BLM 1999) and include:

- Ensure that paleontological resources are given full consideration in land use planning and in management decisions.
- Preserve and protect a representative sample of the full array of the CDCA's paleontological resources.
- Ensure proper data recovery of significant paleontological resources where adverse impacts cannot be avoided or otherwise mitigated.

In summary, the applicable Cultural Resource Element management actions related to paleontology contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- Manage paleontological resources within the CDCA to maximize their protection, systematic and scientific material recovery, and the development of educational and interpretive programs.
- Recognition of four paleontological ACECs.
- Preservation and Protection through a variety of management tools, including Cultural Resources Management Plans, environmental awareness/education, surveillance, stabilization, restoration, and road designation.
- Monitor resource locations to determine types and extent of impacts on paleontological resources caused by MUC designation as well as impacts from consumptive uses and natural processes.
- Develop mitigation plans when resources cannot be protected and/or preserved. Plans will detail steps necessary to recover the resources and otherwise ameliorate the impacts.
- Preserve and protect paleontological values within all MUCs.
- Encourage and support paleontological research especially in high-impact risk areas, as in MUCs M and I.

**West Mojave Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment:**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for this resource under the WEMO.

**Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for this resource under the NEMO.

**Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The NECO RMP does not include goals and objectives and management actions for Paleontology.

**Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

The goals and objectives for Paleontology under the ISD RAMP are described on page 2-58 of the ROD (BLM 2013a) and include:

- Protect and conserve significant paleontological resources as they are discovered on public lands.

- Manage paleontological resources in ways that prioritize research needs, facilitate educational and recreational needs, and protect important sites.
- Develop specific objectives and management actions for fossil localities, when paleontological resources are discovered in the planning area.

In summary, the management actions contained within the ISD RAMP include:

- Evaluate paleontological resources as they are discovered, considering their scientific, educational, and recreational values. Identify appropriate objectives, management actions, and allowable uses for fossil localities as they are found.
- Restrict the collection of all vertebrate fossils and invertebrate and plant fossils of paleontological interest to legitimate scientific or educational uses in accordance with permitting procedures.
- Allow recreational collecting of common invertebrate and plant paleontological resources, in accordance with the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act.
- Require immediate notification should paleontological resources be encountered during project surface-disturbing activities, and cease work in the area of the discovery. Work may not resume until the BLM issues a written authorization to proceed.
- Although all lands within the planning area have been classified as Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) Class 2 (low likelihood for sensitive fossils), a field survey by a qualified paleontologist may be required if future information determines or indicates the presence of important paleontological resources prior to surface-disturbing activities. Management prescriptions for resource preservation and conservation through controlled access or special management designation could be considered. Surface-disturbing activities may require an assessment in PFYC Class 2 areas to determine further courses of action. Assessment or mitigation in PFYC Class 1 areas will not be required except in very rare circumstances.

#### **II.2.2.2.4.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

The plan decisions for Paleontological Resources are outlined in Section 2.6 of the Approved Bakersfield RMP.

#### **Goal**

[PR-G-1] Identify, manage, and protect paleontological resources for scientific research, educational purposes, and public use.



## **Objective**

[PR-O-1] Identify, manage, and protect important paleontological resources.

[PR-O-2] Foster public awareness and appreciation of paleontological resources through educational outreach programs.

## **Decisions**

[PR-D-1] Implement measures to protect paleontological resources from inadvertent damage or destruction through: (a) Avoidance, (b) Fencing, (c) Stabilization, (d) Collection or excavation and deposit in a museum repository, (e) Interpretation, or (f) Administrative closure.

[PR-D-2] Identify areas at risk of damage from illegal activities and implement management to discourage those activities.

[PR-D-3] Ensure that site-specific NEPA (which may include a field inventory and fossil specimen recovery) implements the PFYC as a standard part of review for all surface-disturbing projects throughout the Decision Area.

[PR-D-4] Minimize or prevent human-caused damage to paleontological resources through educational and interpretive outreach programs focusing use on common invertebrate and plant fossils.

[PR-D-5] Accommodate permit requests for scientific research by qualified individuals or institutions.

### **II.2.2.2.4.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for this resource under the Bishop RMP.

### **II.2.2.2.4.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS (BLM 2012a) amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP. Amendments to the CDCA specific to Paleontological Resources include amending land use plans with programmatic design features that would be required for all utility-scale solar energy projects on BLM-administered land including (p. 108):

- Early consultation with BLM regarding identifying and minimizing paleontological resources.

- Developers shall use qualified paleontological monitor during exaction and earth-moving activities in areas with high potential for paleontological resources.
- Developers shall notify BLM immediately upon discovery of fossils and halt work until qualified personnel can visit the site, determine the significance, and make site-specific recommendations. The area of the discovery shall be protected to ensure that the fossils are not removed, handled, altered, or damaged until the site is properly evaluated and further action determined.

#### **II.2.2.2.5    *Lands and Realty***

##### **II.2.2.2.5.1    California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

The goals and objectives for Lands and Realty under the CDCA Plan are described on page 93 (Energy Production and Utility Corridors) and page 97 (Land Tenure Adjustments Goals) of the plan (BLM 1999) and include the following.

#### **Energy Production and Utility Corridors**

- Fully implement the network of joint-use planning corridors to meet projected utility needs to the year 2000.
- Identify environmental constraints and siting procedures that can be used desert-wide by telecommunications firms and public agencies to guide their planning of both individual communication sites and line-of-sight communication systems.
- Identify potential sites for geothermal development, wind energy parks, and power plants.

#### **Land Tenure Adjustment**

- Establish a land tenure program that complements the goals of other Desert Plan elements through the consolidation of public lands within special management areas, such as ACECs, intensive use recreation areas, and MUC C areas.
- Initiate a program for the disposal of public land through sale and exchange within the “Unclassified” areas of the CDCA to reduce inefficient management of isolated and fragmented parcels.
- Sell, exchange, or lease public lands to meet the needs of other governmental agencies for public facilities such as parks, recreation areas, refuse disposal sites.
- Cooperate with other public agencies at all levels to insure that locally adopted land use plans are considered in any land tenure action.

In summary, the management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- All of the lands in the CDCA Plan under BLM management, except for a few scattered parcels (approximately 285,000 acres), have been designated geographically into MUCs. The CDCA Plan identified four MUCs (identified on page 13 of the CDCA Plan) which were based on the sensitive of resources and kinds of uses for each geographic area. Each MUC described a different type and level of degree of use permitted within that geographical area. The MUC guidelines described land use and resource management guidelines for 19 land uses and resources as they applied to each class (Table 1, page 15 of the CDCA Plan).

Acres for existing MUCs in the CDCA are shown in Table II.2-5.

**Table II.2-5**  
**Existing Multiple Use Classes in the CDCA as Amended**  
**(acreage includes major amendments listed below)**

<b>Multiple Use Class</b>	<b>Acres in BLM Ownership</b>
Class C (controlled)	2,759,000
Class I (intensive)	554,000
Class L (limited)	3,915,000
Class M (moderate)	2,285,000
Unclassified	243,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,756,000</b>

- Land Tenure Adjustments for all MUCs will be acquired, disposed of, or exchanges in accordance with FLPMA.
  - Within MUC C and L lands, public lands will not be sold.
  - Within MUC M and Unclassified lands, sale of public lands may be allowed in accordance with FLPMA and other applicable federal laws and regulations. Sales in WSA will not be allowed until after Congressional action.
  - Within MUC I lands, public lands will not be sold.
- ROWs, electrical generation facilities, new transmission, and distribution facilities are permitted based on the MUC.
  - MUC C lands do not allow electrical generation facilities, wind energy facilities, solar energy facilities, and geothermal facilities, new transmission or distribution facilities or communication sites; and allow maintenance of existing transmission facilities and communication sites subject to wilderness management plans.

- MUC L lands do not allow new nuclear generation facilities; MUC L lands allow new electrical generation facilities, wind energy facilities, solar energy facilities, geothermal facilities, and communication sites if NEPA is met; MUC L allows new transmission facilities if within designated corridors and new distribution facilities (with design constraints).
- MUCs M and I allow all these actions if NEPA requirements are met; however,
  - New transmission facilities are only allowed within corridors.
  - Existing transmission facilities within designated corridors may be maintained and upgraded; existing facilities outside designated corridors may be maintained by not upgraded or improved
  - New distribution facilities may be allowed and shall be place within existing rights of way where they are reasonably feasible.
- Unclassified Lands: Scattered and isolated parcels of public lands within the CDCA which have not been placed within MUCs are unclassified land. The BLM will retain or transfer to other appropriate managing agencies those unclassified parcels containing sensitive resources. Parcels with known mineral resources will be selectively retained. Parcels which are found not to contain sensitive resources and would be better used for development purposes will be considered for disposal after appropriate inventories and consultation with local governments are completed.

### **Western Mohave Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The goals and objectives for Lands and Realty under the WEMO RMP are described on 2-29 of the plan (BLM 2006). In summary, the management actions contained within the WEMO include:

- Modification of boundaries of consolidation, retention, and disposal zones to conform with conservation area goals.
- Amendment of select MUC classes to reflect new management actions.
- Removal lands available for exchange within ACECs and change to retention.
- Land acquisition is guided by current BLM and Department of Defense acquisition priorities set by the BLM – Edwards Air Force Base land tenure adjustment strategy. This “LTA” strategy identified lands for disposal (Disposal Zone) while maintaining other lands (Retention and Consolidation Zones), the latter being located primarily in an L-shaped pattern running from north of Adelanto, to the Fremont Peak region, and then east through Superior Valley.

## **Northern and Eastern Mojave/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The goals and objectives for Lands and Realty are under the NEMO RMP are described in on page 2-30, 2-90, and Appendix N (Strategy for Land Tenure in the NEMO planning area; BLM 2002a) and include:

- Acquire sufficient habitat. The goal is to adjust the land ownership pattern through acquisition and disposal of selected lands (1) to improve opportunities for both the management of areas and conservation of natural resources within DWMAs, WHMAs, and existing wilderness; and (2) to facilitate the use of public and private lands in areas of low natural resource values for private, commercial, or social purposes, including the opportunity for community expansion. Acquisition of Catellus and CSLC lands (as well as other private lands) in wilderness areas is a continuing independent process requiring no specific action through the NECO planning process. All acquired lands would automatically be managed under the same criteria as the surrounding public lands.
- The objectives of adjusting the land ownership pattern are to
  - Acquire habitat within DWMAs and WHMAs (limited application in bighorn sheep corridors), to ensure long-term manageability of these areas for conservation of biological ecosystems.
  - Dispose of public lands to private ownership for community expansion where environmentally suitable.
  - Acquire lands for protection of threatened and endangered species, where prudent.

In summary, the management actions contained within the NEMO include:

- Establishing MUC for 475,000 acres of released WSAs.
- Classifying lands as “unclassified” to make them available for future disposal for the purposes of community expansion; acquisition of lands within wilderness.
- Retaining public ownership within DWMAs and WHMAs according to the guidelines of MUCs, ACECs, Wilderness Areas, and other federal requirements unless there is a compelling reason for disposal as determined through NEPA and land use plan amendments. The plan describes the required considerations when decisions are made to dispose of federal lands.
- Acquiring private lands would be accomplished as much as possible and practical through exchange to reduce the impact of loss of tax base to counties and only from willing sellers.

- Prioritizing acquisition of lands within designated DWMAs, WHMAs, and Wilderness Areas.
- Prioritizing acquisition of lands within critical habitat (Amargosa vole [*Microtus californicus scirpensis*]) in support of conservation and recovery.
- Assigning MUC L to all public lands within DWMAs.
- Changing landfill classifications to MUC U to make them available for disposal.
- Actively seeking to acquire lands or interests in lands within DWMAs and WHMAs (except within bighorn sheep corridors) through purchase, donation, or exchange according to scheduled priorities. In DWMAs this includes both private and CSLC lands. In WHMAs this includes only private lands. This action adds to existing policy to acquire both private and CSLC lands in Wilderness Areas.
- BLM would dispose of lands in areas outside wilderness, DWMAs, and WHMAs which do not containing known occurrences of rare plants, springs, bat or other special-status species, and where such action supports consolidation and location of private land to promote private development and increase tax base for local governments. Federal lands potentially suitable for disposal under this action could include lands along freeways and freeway exits; lands adjacent to urban, agricultural, and industrial centers; lands in checkerboard ownership outside other sensitive areas; lands in unclassified areas; and other lands deemed to be unmanageable under federal ownership. Although exchange would be the BLM's preferred method of disposal, the sale of lands could be considered.
- BLM would be interested in acquiring private and CSLC lands outside National Park Service (NPS) lands with known occurrences of Coachella Valley milk-vetch [*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae*] where (1) there is a willing seller, (2) such lands would be manageable, and (3) such lands are not encumbered by highway, other ROW conflicts, or other conflicts. Acquisition would occur only where the action would be consistent with obtaining and retaining lands in federal ownership and would be consistent with current or future urban/agricultural lands uses in the Desert Center area.

### **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The goals and objectives for Lands and Realty under the NECO RMP are described on page 2-90 of the plan (BLM 2002b) and include:

- Acquire habitat within DWMAs and WHMAs (limited application in bighorn sheep corridors), to ensure long-term manageability of these areas for conservation of biological ecosystems.

- Dispose of public lands to private ownership for community expansion where environmentally suitable.
- Acquire lands for protection of threatened and endangered species, where prudent.

In summary, the management actions contained within the NECO include:

- BLM would dispose of lands in areas outside wilderness, DWMAs, and WHMAs and not containing known occurrences of rare plants, springs, bat, or other special-status species and where such action supports consolidation and location of private land to promote private development and increases tax base for local governments.
- Federal agencies would actively seek to acquire lands or interests in lands within DWMAs and WHMAs (except within bighorn sheep corridors) through purchase, donation, or exchange according to ranked priorities.
- Land acquired through compensation or mitigation would be classified CLOSED for disposal or use.
- Designate all MUC M lands in DWMAs as MUC L.
- Acquire private and CSLC lands outside NPS with known occurrences of Coachella Valley milk-vetch.

### **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

The goals and objectives for Lands and Realty under the ISD RAMP are described on pages 2-105 (Land Tenure), 2-106 (Land Use Authorizations), 2-107 (Right-of-way Permits), 2-107 (Communication Sites), 2-111 (Renewable Energy), 2-112 (Withdrawals), and 2-112 (Utility Corridors) of the ROD (BLM 2013a), and include the following.

#### ***Land Tenure***

- Lands or interest in lands (including easements) to be acquired must either:
  - Facilitate access to public lands and resources.
  - Maintain or enhance public uses and values.
  - Facilitate implementation of this proposed RAMP/CDCA Plan amendment and Final EIS.
  - Provide for a more manageable land ownership pattern.
  - Include significant natural or cultural resource values.

### ***Land Use Authorizations***

- Manage recreational and commercial activities within the planning area to accommodate visitor needs, improve visitor experience, and—where consistent with management goals—allow economic benefits for local and regional communities.
- Maintain public access to BLM-administered lands through easements when needed.
- Be responsive to public demand for leases, permits, and easements on a case-by-case basis, consistent with management prescriptions.
- Land is not available for leasing for residential purposes.

### ***Right-of-Way Permits***

- Be responsive to public demand for ROWs on a case-by-case basis, consistent with management prescriptions.

### ***Communication Sites***

- When practicable, consolidate future proposed facilities within existing communication sites, consistent with management prescriptions.

### ***Renewable Energy (Solar and Wind)***

- Provide for the production and distribution of renewable energy, consistent with management of the recreation area and prescriptions.

### ***Withdrawals***

- Protect sensitive or significant natural, biological, and cultural resource and/or recreational values from disturbances relating to locatable mineral entry.

### ***Utility Corridors***

- Major ROWs within the approved corridor would be consolidated to minimize resource impacts.
- The designated corridors will be the preferred location for major utility ROWs consistent with the CDCA Plan, as amended (see Map 2-9).

In summary, the Lands and Realty management actions contained within the ISD RAMP include:

- No lands will be available for disposal within the planning area.
- Currently pending land acquisitions equal 6,603 acres.



- Manage all acquired lands in accordance with the approved land use and planning decisions for surrounding or adjacent BLM-administered lands.
- Consolidate split-estate pursuant to Sections 205 and 206 of FLPMA.
- Any lands acquired by the BLM will include both the surface and subsurface (minerals) estate when possible and will be managed in accordance with the approved land use decisions for the surrounding area.
- Consider leases, permits, and easements on a case-by-case basis to meet public demand consistent with exclusion and avoidance areas identified by alternative.
- Locate new major ROWs in designated corridors, unless an evaluation of the project shows that locating outside of a designated corridor is the only practicable alternative.
- Ensure any application for proposed facilities at existing communication sites is compatible with other uses at the site existing at the time of application.
- Consider applications for new communication sites outside the three existing sites on a case-by-case basis emphasizing co-location and subleasing of facilities, consistent with management proscriptions.
- Make land available for renewable energy development consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and policy and in accordance with the approved land use and planning decisions.
- Use BLM Wind Energy Development Program Policies and best management practices established in Attachment A of the ROD (BLM 2005) for all site-specific wind development projects.
- Use BLM's Solar PEIS ROD for all qualifying site-specific solar development projects. Projects within the Planning Area will be administered as variance lands under the policies and processes described in the Solar Programmatic EIS ROD.
- Use the State of California Best Management Practices and Guidance Manual: Desert Renewable Energy Projects, for development of renewable energy projects in the planning area. The BLM and other Renewable Energy Action Team agencies authored the manual. The BLM may modify these best management practices as necessary over time.
- Land available for lease for solar energy development within the planning area includes 27,606 acres available as variance lands; no avoidance areas; and 161,226 acres excluded (Map 2-10).
- Land available for lease for wind energy development within the planning area includes 35,115 acres available; no avoidance areas; and 153,717 acres excluded (Map 2-11).

- Seek revocation of existing withdrawals, if the land is no longer needed for the original purpose of the withdrawal. Current withdrawal lands are shown in Map 2-12.
- Continue periodic review of existing withdrawals, including other agency withdrawals, to ensure that the reasons for the withdrawal are still valid and that only the acreage needed is retained in withdrawn status.
- Continue the existing three utility corridors (one is a contingency corridor). There is one 2-mile-wide existing utility corridor along Interstate 8 on BLM-administered lands within the planning area. A second utility corridor begins in the northernmost portion of the planning area near Mammoth Wash and runs north (see Map 2-9). The contingency corridor travels along the eastern boundary of the planning area adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks (see Map 2-9).
- Locate all new major utility ROWs within the designated corridors and consisting of the following types: (1) new electrical transmission towers and cables of 161 kV or above; (2) all pipelines with diameters greater than 12 inches; (3) coaxial cables for interstate communications; and (4) major aqueducts or canals for interbasin transfers of water.
- Avoid special designation areas and environmentally sensitive areas, where practical.

#### **II.2.2.2.5.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

The Bakersfield RMP identifies the following plan decisions for lands and realty in Section 2.12.

#### **Goal**

[LR-G-1] Provide lands, interests in land, and authorizations for public and private uses while maintaining and improving resource values and public land administration to the extent consistent with federal law.

#### **Objectives**

[LR-O-1] Meet other resource objectives through retention and/or land tenure adjustments.

[LR-O-2] Meet public, private, and Federal agency needs for realty-related land use authorizations and land withdrawals, including those authorizations necessary for wind, solar, biomass, and other forms of renewable energy development, to the extent consistent with federal law.

[LR-O-3] Increase public access to public lands when consistent with other resource objectives.

[LR-O-4] Resolve unauthorized uses or occupancy to assure consistency with RMP goals and objectives.

## Land Tenure

### *Decisions*

[LR-D-1.1] Disposal of the following areas is not deemed to serve national interest; components of the NCL; lands managed for wilderness characteristics; Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) acquisitions; leased fluid mineral estate; mineral estate with significant fluid mineral potential 5F 6; and SRMAs.

[LR-D-1.2] Retain all lands and interest in lands in federal ownership unless disposal is deemed to serve national interest. Disposal is deemed to serve national interest if the following criteria are determined to be met through site specific investigation and, therefore, would be considered available for disposal:

- a. Disposal of lands would promote effective administration;
- b. Lands do not contain important cultural, biological, recreational, or other resource values, the loss of which cannot be adequately mitigated;
- c. Lands do not contribute to a regional conservation strategy or habitat linkage;
- d. Lands do not have overriding public values or interests; and
- e. Lands do not represent substantial public investments.

[LR-D-1.3] Lands considered available for disposal that meet the following criteria as described in section 203(a) of FLPMA may be sold under direct, competitive, or modified sale:

- a. Such tract because of its location or other characteristics is difficult and uneconomic to manage as part of the public lands, and is not suitable for management by another department or agency; or
- b. Such tract was acquired for specific purpose and the tract is no longer required for that or any other purpose; or
- c. Disposal of such tract will serve important public objectives, including but not limited to, expansion of communities and economic development, which cannot be achieved prudently or feasibly on land other than public land and which outweigh other public objectives and values, including, but not limited to, recreation and scenic values, which would be served by maintaining such tract in federal ownership.

[LR-D-1.4] Seek acquisition of lands and interest in lands meeting the following criteria from willing grantors;

- a. Demonstrate high cultural, biological or other natural resource values, important recreational opportunities or mineral potential;
- b. Located within specially designated areas (e.g., ACECs, Components of the NCL, SRMAs);
- c. Provide access to existing parcels of public lands; and
- d. Promote effective administration.

[LR-D-1.5] Determine the public lands (61,440 acres) and federal mineral estate (337,440 acres) shown on Map 2.17 as available for consideration of a disposal action (sale, exchange, or other means) in so much that these lands meet the “isolated, difficult or expensive to manage, or are needed for community expansion” disposal criteria contained in FLPMA Section 203(a). However, site-specific investigation to ascertain whether a specific parcel meets the disposal criteria outlined in this RMP would still be required prior to any disposal action being taken.

[LR-D-1.6] Manage newly acquired land to meet the same goals and objectives, and under the same allocations and management decisions, as surrounding public lands or in a manner consistent with the terms of acquisition, to the extent consistent with federal law.

## **Land Use Authorizations**

### ***Decisions***

[LR-D-2.1] Continue the designation of existing and potential utility corridors delineated in the Western Regional Utility Corridor Study of 1993 as right-of-way corridors.

[LR-D-2.2] Identify 142,630 acres as available for utility scale renewable energy rights-of-way. In addition, 285,460 acres would be available for all types if rights-of-way.

[LR-D-2.3] Utility-scale renewable energy rights-of-way will be excluded on 262,340 acres, including: all ACECs, the Piedras Blancas ONA, SRMAs, VRM Class I and II, designated Wilderness areas and the PCNST corridor. Of this acreage, all other types of rights-of-way will be excluded on 118,860 acres: designated Wilderness and the PCNST corridor. (Map 2.18 and Map 2.19)

[LR-D-2.4] Proposed rights-of-way will be avoided on 103,510 acres, except where a specific type of right-of-way is excluded (LR-D-2.3): all ACECs, WSAs, lands managed for wilderness characteristics, the Piedras Blancas ONA, and suitable Wild and Scenic River corridors. (Map 2.18 and Map 2.19).

[LR-D-2.5] Utility-scale renewable energy rights-of-way will be avoided on a total of 31,300 acres of: Tehachapi Linkage area of ecological importance (27,290 acres), WSAs (1,860 acres), and lands managed for wilderness characteristics (2,150 acres). (Map 2.18).

[LR-D-2.6] Apply resource specific, Best Management Practices (such as BMPs for VRM, air, soil, water, biological resources, etc., see Appendix 3) as terms and conditions to ROW authorizations based on site-specific NEPA analysis to minimize environmental impacts.

## **Withdrawals**

### ***Decisions***

[LR-D-3.1] Continue the existing withdrawal from application under the non-mineral public land laws and from disposition under the homestead, desert land entry and script selection laws for the Caliente, Monache-Walker Pass and Temblor National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Areas (NCLWMAs) (183,620 acres) (Public Land Order 2460).

[LR-D-3.2] Continue the existing withdrawal from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general land laws, including the United States mining laws, 30 U.S.C. Ch. 2 (1994), mineral leasing laws, 30 U.S.C. 181 et seq. (1994) and mineral material sale laws 30 U.S.C. 601-604 (1994), of Piedras Blancas Light Station (20 acres) as shown on Map 2.20 (Public Land Order 7501).

[LR-D-3.3] Continue the existing withdrawal from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including the mining laws, 30 U.S.C. Ch. 2, but not from leasing under the mineral leasing laws, of the Piute Cypress Natural Area (760 acres) as shown on Map 2.20 (Public Land Order 3510).

[LR-D-3.4] Continue the existing withdrawal from location under the General Mining Law, 30 U.S.C. Ch. 2, of the Keysville (390 acres) and San Joaquin River Gorge (3,070 acres) areas as shown on Map 2.20.

[LR-D-3.5] Recommend the riparian zone in Salinas River ACEC (approximately 10 acres) as shown on Map 2.20 for proposal to be withdrawn from appropriation and entry under the General Mining Law.

#### **II.2.2.2.5.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

The Bishop RMP ROD identifies the following SOPs for Realty (BLM 1993, p. 14):

- A site-specific environmental assessment will be required before any disposal of BLM land. Only parcels identified in the RMP will be available for disposal. All other BLM lands will be retained in public ownership.

- All existing and future power lines must meet nonelectrocution standards for raptors. Raptor habitat enhancement will be incorporated into facility design where feasible.

The Bishop RMP also includes the following area-wide decisions applicable to lands and realty within the DRECP Area (p. 16):

- Unless otherwise stated in the plan, all BLM lands will be retained in public ownership. Lands identified for disposal are either difficult or uneconomic to manage and would best serve the public interest in private ownership. Land disposal may also be used to resolve inadvertent occupancy trespass (cases where survey error has resulted in home construction on BLM land). BLM lands will not be available for disposal under the agricultural land laws.
- Land exchange is the preferred method of disposal. Where land exchange is impractical, lands identified for disposal may be sold under authority of FLPMA.
- Disposals to resolve inadvertent occupancy trespass will be limited to the smallest legal subdivision which includes the private development.
- Recreation and Public Purposes Act patents may be issued on lands identified for disposal.

Bishop RMP area-wide decisions designated north-south utility corridors along existing transmission lines, as follows (p. 16):

- Utility corridors 0.50 mile wide are designated along the following transmission lines:
  - The 500 kV DC Intertie from where it enters California near State Highway 167 to where it exits the resource area near Olancho.
  - The 115 kV Southern California Edison Double Circuit Line from the Bishop Substation to where it exits the resource area near Olancho.
- The following conditions and mitigation measures apply to these corridors:
  1. Corridors extend 0.25 mile on both sides of the specified lines with two exceptions, both outside the DRECP Area.
  2. Future facilities in these corridors may be allowed to exceed Visual Resource Management (VRM) and Yearlong Protection standards. Extensive mitigation will be required and may include, but is not limited to:
    - a. Painting and use of non-specular steel materials to reduce visibility.
    - b. Requiring the use of shared facilities.

The first applicant for a ROW in either corridor will be required to conduct a study to determine how many transmission lines the corridor can accommodate.

#### **II.2.2.2.5.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS (BLM 2012a) amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP. Amendments to the CDCA specific to Lands and Realty include:

- Specific land use allocation for Solar Exclusion Areas (closed to solar)
- Specific land use allocations for SEZs (open to solar and incentivized, Section B.4.3); CDCA Amendment: Riverside East and Imperial East SEZs
- Processes for expanding or including new SEZs (B.4.5)
- Specific land use allocations for Solar Variance Lands (open to solar, with environmental considerations and policies)
- Programmatic Design Features for Lands and Realty (among other resources) and SEZ-specific design features
- Programmatic Policies for Utility-Scale Solar Development
- Public Lands within designated SEZs are withdrawn for a 20-year duration pursuant to Public Land Order (June 27, 2013) subject to valid existing rights, from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general land laws, including the mining laws, as follows:
  - New mining claims cannot be filed on the withdrawn lands; however, valid mining claims filed prior to the date the lands were segregated (i.e., the date withdrawal notice was published in the *Federal Register*) would take precedence over future solar energy development ROW application filings.
  - Lands cannot be sold, exchanged, or otherwise disposed of during the term of the withdrawal.
  - Withdrawn lands remain open to mineral leasing, geothermal leasing, and mineral material laws; the BLM could elect to lease the oil, gas, coal, or geothermal steam resources, or to sell common-variety mineral materials, such as sand and gravel, if the authorized officer determined there would be no unacceptable impacts on future solar energy development.
  - Withdrawn lands remain open to ROW authorizations and land leases or permits authorized under Section 302 of the FLPMA.

### **II.2.2.2.6     *Livestock Grazing***

#### **II.2.2.2.6.1     California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

The goals and objectives for livestock grazing under the CDCA Plan are described on page 56 (Livestock Grazing; BLM 1999) and include:

- Use range management to maintain or improve vegetation to meet livestock needs and to meet other management objectives set forth in the plan.
- Continue the use of the California Desert for livestock production to contribute to satisfying the need for food and fiber from public land.
- Maintain good and excellent range condition and improve poor and fair range condition by one condition class, through development and implementation of feasible grazing systems or Allotment Management Plans. Adjust livestock use where monitoring data indicate changes are necessary to meet resource objectives.

In summary, the management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- Allocation of animal unit months for perennial forage for livestock on existing allotments designated as perennial and ephemeral/perennial, and use of ephemeral forages as it becomes available. Allotments will be managed accordingly as required by the Allotment Management Plans and include establishment of appropriate stocking levels, seasons of use, turnout times, levels of forage use, monitoring and adjustment procedures, watering and handling practices, and range improvements.
- Review and adjust forage allotments if monitoring indicates the need.
- Incorporate range improvements including elements such as fencing, water pipeline, wells, spring developments, catchments, and troughs.
- Base turnout dates on the emergence of tortoise in habitat. Riparian habitats will be protected either by fencing or by ensuring proper use levels.
- Manage grazing based on MUCs:
  - MUC C:
    - Grazing will be allowed subject to limitations to preserve wilderness characteristics and the protection of sensitive resources, except that existing grazing will only be subject to the protection of sensitive resources.
    - Major support facilities, such as permanent corrals, loading chutes, and significant water developments, will not be allowed except for existing facilities pursuant to valid existing leases, licenses, and permits. Maintenance of such facilities will be controlled to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of wilderness values.



- Manipulation of vegetation by chemical or mechanical means will not be allowed.
- MUC L:
  - Grazing will be allowed subject to the protection of sensitive resources.
  - Support facilities such as corrals, loading chutes, water developments, and other facilities, permanent or temporary, may be allowed consistent with protection of sensitive resources.
  - Manipulation of vegetation by chemical or mechanical means will not be allowed, except for site-specific needs.
- MUCs M and I:
  - Grazing will be allowed subject to protection of sensitive resources.
  - Support facilities, such as corrals, loading chutes, water developments, and other facilities, permanent or temporary, will be allowed.
  - Manipulation of vegetation by chemical or mechanical means may be allowed and may be designed, development, and managed for intensive livestock use.

### **West Mojave Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment<sup>3</sup>**

The WEMO recommended the establishment of Regional Standards for Public Land Health and set forth guidelines for grazing management (BLM 2006). Until these standards are approved by the Secretary of the Interior, these lands continue to be managed under the fallback standards specified at 43 CFR Part 4100.

In summary, the management actions contained within the WEMO include:

- Prescriptions governing utilization of key perennial species by livestock in continuous year-long operations.
- Specific prescriptions for all cattle allotments managed by the BLM in the planning area that are not located within either desert tortoise habitat or the Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Area, including conducting Health Assessments and implementing corrective actions as needed.
- Specific prescriptions for all cattle allotments managed by the BLM in the planning area that are located within either desert tortoise habitat or the Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Area. These include management prescriptions from existing Biological Opinions as well as allotment boundary modifications, changes in

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<sup>3</sup> The West Mojave Plan CDCA Plan Amendments are currently under review for possible amendment. See Volume I, Section I.3 for an overview of the proposed amendments and their intersection with the DRECP LUPA.

livestock kind and use designations at select locations, and specific measures to minimize and prevent adverse effects to tortoises.

- Specific prescriptions for sheep grazing including minimum ephemeral forage that must be present before sheep can be turned out, limits to the number of sheep in a combined band, Health Assessments for all allotments available for grazing (except for allotments that will be excluded from grazing), and restrictions on sheep grazing in the Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Area.
- Exclusion of grazing from select locations that support target species.

### **Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The NEMO recommended the establishment of Regional Standards for Public Land Health and set forth guidelines for grazing management (BLM 2002a). Until these standards are approved by the Secretary of the Interior, these lands continue to be managed under the fallback standards specified at 43 CFR Part 4100.

In summary, the management actions contained within the NEMO include:

- Recommend the establishment of Regional Standards for Public Land Health and set forth guidelines for grazing management. Until these Standards are approved by the Secretary of the Interior, these lands continue to be managed under the fallback standards specified at 43 CFR Part 4100.

### **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The NECO recommended the establishment of Regional Standards for Public Land Health and set forth guidelines for grazing management (BLM 2002b). Until these standards are approved by the Secretary of the Interior, these lands continue to be managed under the fallback standards specified at 43 CFR Part 4100.

In summary, the management actions contained within the NECO included:

- Locating facilities away from riparian-wetland areas when they conflict with achieving the riparian-wetland functions.
- Design development of springs and seeps or other water affecting projects to protect ecological functions and processes.
- New range improvement facilities and supplements would be located away from wetland systems.
- Management practices would maintain and promote perennial stream channel morphology and functions appropriate to climate and land form.

- Grazing management practices must meet state and federal water quality standards.
- In the CDCA, all wildfires in grazing allotments would be suppressed. To restore degraded habitats infested with invasive weeds, prescribed burning may be used.
- When weather results in extraordinary conditions, seed germination, seedling establishment, and native plant species growth would be allowed by modifying grazing use.
- Grazing on designated ephemeral rangeland would be allowed only if reliable estimates of production have been made, an identified level of annual growth or residue to remain on site at the end of the grazing season has been established, and adverse effects on perennial species are avoided.
- During prolonged drought, range stocking would be reduced.
- The extent of invasive and/or exotic plants and animals would be recorded and evaluated for future control measures.
- Methods and prescriptions would be implemented, and an evaluation would be completed to ascertain future control measures.
- Habitats would be restored, maintained, or enhanced to assist in the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species.
- Grazing activities would support biological diversity across the landscape, and native species and microbiotic crusts are to be maintained.
- Experimental research efforts would be encouraged to provide answers to grazing management and related resource concerns through cooperative and collaborative efforts with outside agencies, groups, and entities.
- Livestock utilization limits of key perennial species would follow guidelines established in this RMP.

### **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for Livestock Grazing under the ISD RAMP because there are no grazing allotments with the ISD. The ISD RAMP does include goals and objectives, and management actions for Land Health Standards Management, which are described starting on page 2-18 of the ROD (BLM 2013a), and are incorporated by reference. Until these standards are approved by the Secretary of the Interior, these lands continue to be managed under the fallback standards specified at 43 CFR Part 4100.

#### **II.2.2.2.6.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

The RMP decisions for livestock grazing are described in Section 2.13 of the Bakersfield RMP.

#### **Goal**

[LG-G-1] Manage livestock grazing authorizations in a manner that meets or exceeds the Standards for Rangeland Health and is consistent with other RMP goals.

#### **Objective**

[LG-O-1] Manage grazing authorizations to meet or exceed the Standards of Rangeland Health.

[LG-O-2] Provide for livestock grazing opportunities on lands in the grazing decision area in a manner that limits impacts on other resources and meets RMP goals.

#### **Decisions**

[LG-D-1] Allocate public lands for livestock grazing based on the following acreages (Map 2.21):

- a. Available: 328,900 acres
- b. Unavailable: 66,100 acres

[LG-D-2] Identify 7,800 acres (Atwell Island) of those acres allocated as Available for livestock grazing only for the purpose of vegetation management objectives other than producing livestock forage.

[LG-D-3] Allocate newly acquired lands to match allocations given to the surrounding or adjacent lands, except where land is unsuitable for livestock grazing or the purpose for which the land was acquired is incompatible with livestock grazing based on resource conditions or in accordance with use restrictions contained in acquisition documents<sup>7F 8</sup>, to the extent consistent with federal law.

[LG-D-4] Manage livestock grazing on individual pastures of allotments or entire allotments which lie primarily within the Bakersfield FO Planning Area in conformance with this RMP's goals and objectives. Allow management of livestock grazing on individual pastures of allotments or entire allotments which lie primarily within other Field Office or BLM jurisdictional boundaries in conformance with the goals and objectives applicable to the managing office's land use plan.

[LG-D-5] Apply the appropriate Central California Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM 1999; [http://www.blm.gov/ca/pdfs/caso\\_pdfs/Cen-ROD.pdf](http://www.blm.gov/ca/pdfs/caso_pdfs/Cen-ROD.pdf)) to the applicable grazing authorizations as needed to meet the Central California Standards for

Rangeland Health (see page 63 of the Approved Bakersfield RMP for the details of the Central California Standards for Rangeland Health).

[LG-D-6] Apply the appropriate Bakersfield FO-specific guidelines for livestock grazing management to the applicable grazing authorizations within the grazing decision area, as outlined on page 70 of the Approved Bakersfield RMP.

[LG-D-7] Authorize livestock grazing at the initial implementation levels, as outlined in Table 2.3 of the approved RMP. Based on existing authorizations, projected new authorizations and application of the Central California and Bakersfield FO Specific Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, forage authorized for livestock grazing within the Decision Area would total approximately 40,200 AUMs.

#### **II.2.2.2.6.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

Bishop RMP SOPs for Livestock Grazing are described on pages 10–12 of the ROD (BLM 1993).

They address grazing systems, grazing management practices, and range improvement project development. The ROD, Central California Standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing (2000) amended the RMP. Following this, the Bishop Field Office conducted Environmental Assessments and issued subsequent decisions resulting in fully processed 10-year grazing permits for all allotments within the DRECP Area. The Bishop RMP also specifies which lands are allocated (allotted) to permitted livestock grazing and prescribes the mandatory terms and conditions for all allotments administered by the Bishop Field Office.

#### **II.2.2.2.6.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The adoption of the 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS (BLM 2012a) amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP. Amendments to the CDCA specific to grazing include amending land use plans with programmatic design features that would be required for all utility-scale solar energy projects on BLM-administered land including:

- Early consultation with the BLM to identify activities that could impact rangeland resources and grazing (p. 56).
- Construct, improve, and maintain roads to minimize impacts on grazing.

### **II.2.2.2.7 Minerals**

#### **II.2.2.2.7.1 California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

The goals and objectives for Minerals under the CDCA Plan are described on page 84 (Geology, Energy and Mineral Resources Element; BLM 1999) and include:

- Within the multiple-use management framework, assure the availability of known mineral resource lands for exploration and development.
- Encourage the development of mineral resources in a manner which satisfies national and local needs and provides for economically and environmentally sound exploration, extraction, and reclamation processes.
- Develop a mineral resource inventory, Geology, Energy, and Mineral database, and professional, technical, and managerial staff knowledgeable in mineral exploration and development.

In addition, specific objectives of the element are to:

- Continue to recognize ways of access and opportunities for exploration and development on public lands which are assessed to have potential for critical mineral resources, those minerals of national defense importance, those of which the U.S. imports 50% or more, and those of which the U.S. is a net exporter.
- Continue to recognize ways of access and opportunities for exploration and development on public lands which are assessed to have potential for energy mineral resources. These are geothermal, oil, gas, uranium, and thorium, considered to be paramount priorities both nationally and within the State of California.
- Continue to recognize ways of access and opportunities for exploration and development on public lands which are assessed to have potential for mineral resources of local and state importance. These are sand and gravel, limestone, gypsum, iron, specialty clays, and zeolites. (Since the analysis was made in June 1980, zeolites have become of national importance.)

In summary, the management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- Maintain an accurate and comprehensive information base of mineral resources in the CDCA.
- All mineral exploration and mining operations on public lands under BLM surface administration in MUCs C, L, M, and I will be subject to the BLM's surface-mining regulations under 43 CFR 3802 and 43 CFR 3809. This includes regulating to prevent "undue degradation" of public lands and to provide environmental

safeguards. Regulations incorporate three distinct levels of operations (p. 89):  
Casual Use – No Notice or Plan Required, Surface Disturbance of Less than 5 Acres – Notice Required, and Disturbance on More than 5 Acres Due to Mining in Special Areas – Plan of Operations Required.

- Lands affected by all operations regardless of level shall be reclaimed as required by regulations (43 CFR 3809.1-1).
- An environmental analysis (EA) is required to be completed on each plan of operation submitted. The EA will focus only on the proposed operation and the mitigation requirements necessary to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the area of operations. Bonding of a plan of operations is discretionary and is based on the actual cost of reclamation, on a per-acre basis.
- Salton Sea. While the area surrounding the Salton Sea has been excluded from the MUC due to the sensitive nature of the Salton Sea, which is potential habitat for some federally listed rare and endangered wildlife species, the guidelines for MUC L will apply to all mineral leasing activities (oil, gas, geothermal, sodium, and potash) on public land in and under the Salton Sea.
- Through agreement with the State Resources Agency, allow the State of California, through the counties which are the lead agencies under the State Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMRA), to jointly administer the BLM's surface-mining regulations on the public lands. The combined BLM and SMRA requirements, whichever are stricter in terms of required mitigation measures, will be the requirements that the operator will eventually have to meet. While the State of California may administer much of the permitting process, BLM recognizes its responsibility to monitor mining activities and will do so.
- All mineral-exploration and surface-mining operations that are not grandfathered under Section 603 of FLPMA are subject to the BLM's surface-mining mandate that all surface-mining and exploration operations conducted within a WSA must be conducted in such a manner as not to impair the suitability of the area of wilderness. The two main criteria involved are the reclamation potential of the disturbed area and how the disturbed site affects the WSA as a unit, not on a localized basis.
- Manage mineral resources based on MUCs:
  - MUC C: Management is based on Congressional designation.
  - MUC L, M, and I:
    - Leasable Minerals: Except as provided in BLM Categorical Exclusions, prior to approving any lease, notice, or application that was filed pursuant to 43 CFR 3045, 3100, 3200, 3500, and S.O. 3087, as amended, an EA will be prepared on the proposed action. Mitigation and reclamation measures will

be required to protect and rehabilitate sensitive scenic, ecological, wildlife, vegetative, and cultural values.

- Locatable Minerals:
  - Location of mining claims is nondiscretionary. Operations on mining claims are subject to 43 CFR 3809 regulations and applicable state and local law.
  - NEPA requirements will be met.
  - BLM will review plans of operations for potential impacts on sensitive resources identified on lands in this class. Mitigation, subject to technical and economic feasibility, will be required.
- Saleable Minerals:
  - Except as provided in BLM Categorical Exclusions, new material sales locations, including sand and gravel sites, will require an EA.
  - Continued use of existing areas of sand and gravel extractions is allowed subject to BLM permits as specified in 43 CFR 3600.

### **West Mojave Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

Specific goals and objectives for this resource are not identified under the WEMO.

In summary, the management actions contained within the WEMO (BLM 2006) include:

- Federally acquired private lands and mineral resources within conservation areas are withdrawn, limiting access and availability of these resources to development.
- Existing mines in HCAs and DWMAs, where the activity is not in occupied habitat, would be allowed to continue without compensation payments because they qualify as grandfathered uses.

### **Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for this resource under the NEMO.

### **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The NECO RMP does not include goals and objectives for Mineral Resources.

The management action for mineral resources (BLM 2002b) is:

- All mining and mineral activities are subject to mitigation and compensation requirements. Whenever feasible, existing pits would be utilized for sand and gravel operations.



## **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

The goals and objectives for Minerals under the ISD RAMP are described on page 2-72 of the ROD (BLM 2013a) and include:

- Provide opportunities for exploration, location, and development of mining claims and sites while preventing unnecessary or undue degradation of public lands and resources.

In summary, the management actions contained within the ISD RAMP include:

- Consolidate, through land tenure adjustments, surface and subsurface (minerals) estates under single ownerships when possible, thereby improving manageability of the federal lands involved. Consolidate split-estate pursuant to Sections 205 and 206 of FLPMA.
- Require a notice prior to conducting any exploration—defined as the search for and collection of geochemical, rock, soil, or mineral specimens using mechanized and/or motorized earth moving equipment—when removing less than 1,000 tons of presumed ore for testing, and causing surface disturbance of less than 5 acres.
- Require mining plans of operations for any explorations that would remove 1,000 tons or more of presumed ore for testing and/or result in surface disturbance greater than 5 acres, any operations that would result in greater than negligible surface disturbance, and operations that would use any mechanized or motorized earth moving equipment. A plan of operations must be approved by the authorized officer of the BLM and may be subject to stipulations to assure conformance with the land-use plan.
- Require an investigation and a report to determine the validity of the mining claim prior to approval of a mining plan of operations in withdrawn areas where the mining claim predates the withdrawal.
- Require a mining plan of operations in any special designation in accordance with existing 43 CFR 3809 regulations.
- Mining activities will be in compliance with all State of California reclamation requirements, particularly the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act.
- Congressionally designated wilderness is legislatively withdrawn from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws.
- Maintain ACEC(s) as open to mineral entry under the Mining Law, subject to Section 7 and Section 106 consultations.
- Maintain the ISD SRMA, excluding wilderness, as open to mineral entry under the Mining Law, subject to Section 7 and Section 106 consultations.

- Map 2-4 shows land available for geothermal minerals leasing within the Planning Area. For geothermal leasing, 35,115 acres are available, 139,691 acres are not available, and 14,025 acres are available, but with a no surface occupancy stipulation.
- In highly sensitive areas, where special stipulations are not sufficient to protect surface resource values, including recreation, special status species, and special designations, stipulations for no surface occupancy for leasable mineral development may be attached to the lease, in addition to no surface occupancy stipulations outlined in this plan.
- Manage consistent with the Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard Rangewide Management Strategy.
- Classify the flat-tailed horned lizard management area as available for geothermal leasing, but with a no surface occupancy stipulation.
- Classify the 1-mile-wide planning zone surrounding the SRMA (excluding the flat-tailed horned lizard management area) as available for geothermal minerals leasing.
- Exclude donated lands from geothermal minerals leasing.
- Exclude the ISD SRMA from geothermal minerals leasing.
- Prohibit surface occupancy within critical habitat, ACEC(s), other special area designations, and camping and staging areas.
- Wilderness is not available for minerals leasing.
- Issue mineral material sales or free use permits on a case-by-case basis in the approximate 1-mile-wide planning zone around the ISD SRMA consistent with applicable land use plans.
- Prohibit mineral sales or free use permits within the ISD SRMA.

#### **II.2.2.2.7.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

The Minerals Management decisions of the Bakersfield RMP are outlined in Section 2.14 of the Bakersfield RMP.

#### **Goal**

[MM-G-1] Support development of mineral resources on public lands in an environmentally sound manner.

#### **Leasable Minerals**

Note that there is no oil and gas leasing within the DRECP, therefore, the fluid minerals decisions are not relevant to the DRECP, and are not listed here.

## **Solid (Non-Energy) Leasable Minerals**

### ***Objective***

[MM-O-1.2] Provide opportunities for reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound exploration and development of Solid (Non-Energy) leasable minerals while minimizing impacts to resources.

### ***Decisions***

[MM-D-1.2.1] Identify 108,540 acres as closed to Solid (Non-Energy) leasable mineral development: all ACECs, lands managed for wilderness characteristics, and suitable segments of WSRs (Map 2.23).

[MM-D-1.2.2] Identify 906,906 acres as open to solid (non-energy) mineral leasing and development.

## **Locatable Minerals**

### ***Objective***

[MM-O-2] Facilitate reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound exploration and development of locatable minerals, while ensuring compatibility with other resources and uses including public health and safety.

### ***Decisions***

[MM-D-2.1] Establish the following ACECs, areas of ecological importance, cultural resource sites and RMZs (52,210 acres), in accordance with 43 CFR 3809.31, as areas requiring a 15 day notification be given to the BLM prior to beginning any activity under the mining laws including Casual Use, to allow the BLM to determine whether a notice or plan of operations must be submitted: Ancient Lakeshores ACEC, Blue Ridge ACEC, Chico Martinez ACEC, Cypress Mountain ACEC, Erskine Creek ACEC, Hopper Mountain ACEC, Horse Canyon ACEC, Kaweah ACEC, Point Sal ACEC, Terra Redonda ACEC, Deer Springs, Frog Pond, Granite Cave, Huasna Peak, South Lake Cultural Area, Gold Fever RMZ, The Dam RMZ, Wallow Rock RMZ (Map 2.24). Furthermore, in evaluating mining Notices or Plans of Operation undue and unnecessary degradation will consider the values, resources and objectives for which these areas have been designated or identified in the RMP.

[MM-D-2.2] Interpret the definition of Casual Use provided in 43 CFR 3809.5 for the Decision Area to include the following stipulations, any operations not meeting these would require the filing of a notice or plan of operations:

- a. Casual Use does not include the disturbance to trees (DBH 4" and greater) and shrubs (taller or wider than 3'); including their root areas (i.e., removal or undermining of these vegetation types will require at a minimum a Notice);
- b. Casual Use does not include any operations on or within 30 feet of the centerline of designated routes and trails;
- c. Casual Use does not include any activity that pumps water from water courses for any purpose, except in association with Suction Dredging;
- d. Casual Use does not include the removal of more than one cubic yard of material from the site for offsite processing;
- e. Casual Use does not include activity that creates high walls in excess of 3 feet or undermines earthen banks, large rocks, or boulders.
- f. Casual Use does not include any high-banking, hydraulic mining, and ground sluicing;
- g. Casual Use does not include any sluices, riffle boxes, and dry washers with collecting surfaces of greater than ten square feet;
- h. Casual use does not include any disturbance that would result in an adverse effect, as described by Section 106 of the NHPA, to listed, eligible, and those sites or historic districts being treated as eligible until formal eligibility evaluations have been completed; and
- i. Casual Use will abide by the discovery clause; whereby all activity will cease upon discovery of any subsurface archaeological, historical, or paleontological remains. The discovery must be left intact and reported to the BLM immediately. Operations may only resume on clearance by the BLM and may require the filing of a Notice or Plan of Operations.

## **Salable Minerals**

### ***Objectives***

[MM-O-3] Provide salable minerals needed for community and economic purposes and facilitate their reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound development where available and compatible with resource objectives.

## ***Decisions***

[MM-D-3.1] Identify 108,540 acres as closed to mineral material disposal: all ACECs, lands managed for wilderness characteristics and suitable segments of WSRs, unless otherwise noted for administrative purposes only (Map 2.25).

[MM-D-3.2] Identify 906,906 acres as open to mineral material disposal.

### **II.2.2.2.7.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

Bishop RMP SOPs pertaining to Minerals are described on page 14 of the ROD (BLM 1993). In summary, they address reclamation bonds; claim markers; review of Notices of Intent for undue and unnecessary degradation determination; conformance with state, county, and local requirements; and survey and management of underground mines for wildlife, particularly bats.

Area-wide decisions pertaining to minerals (p. 22) indicate specific areas and acreages closed to locatable mineral entry (none within the DRECP Area) and state:

- Provide salable minerals for community and private use.

### **II.2.2.2.7.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS (BLM 2012a) amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP. Amendments to the CDCA specific to mineral resources include amending land use plans with programmatic design features that would be required for all utility-scale solar energy projects on BLM-administered land including (p. 67):

- Early consultation with the BLM to identify activities that could impact mineral development activities and ways to minimize potential adverse impacts.
- All qualifying solar energy development ROWs will stipulate that the BLM retains the right to issue oil and gas or geothermal leases with a stipulation of no surface occupancy within the ROW area.
- Solar energy development shall be located to minimize conflicts with valid existing mineral rights and/or ongoing mineral development.
- For the Imperial East SEZ, the management design feature include protecting the potential for geothermal leasing under solar energy facilities, such that ROW authorizations would be made subject to future geothermal leasing with no surface occupancy stipulations.

### **II.2.2.2.8    *Recreation and Visitor Services***

#### **II.2.2.2.8.1    California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

The goals and objectives for recreation and visitor services under the CDCA Plan are described on page 69 (Recreation Element; BLM 1999) and include:

- Provide for a wide range of quality recreation opportunities and experiences emphasizing dispersed undeveloped use.
- Provide a minimum of recreation facilities. Those facilities should emphasize resource protection and visitor safety.
- Manage recreation use to minimize user conflicts, provide a safe recreation environment, and protect desert resources.
- Emphasize the use of public information and education techniques to increase public awareness, enjoyment, and sensitivity to desert resources.
- Adjust management approach to accommodate changing visitor use patterns and preferences.
- Encourage the use and enjoyment of desert recreation opportunities by special populations, and provide facilities to meet the needs of those groups.

In summary, the applicable goals and management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- Designate Superior and Ivanpah Dry Lakes for nonmotorized open-space recreational activities.
- Manage public lands to meet the demand for recreation use especially any significant demand adjacent to desert communities.
- Survey and construction activities on the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and complete the BLM Management Plan. BLM will study National Historic Trail portions and consider Desert Trail concepts and implementation. Recreation Activity Management Plans will consider connector trails from urban centers to trail systems in the CDCA.
- Provide for scientific research and education on public lands, establish new areas for study, and incorporate education and research into the BLM's ongoing monitoring systems.
- Provide opportunities for solitude and primitive or unconfined forms of recreation in Wilderness Areas.

- Provide opportunities for motorized-vehicle play open areas. Make areas suitable for motorized-vehicle recreation available to the public through use of the state OHV funds.
- The BLM allows organized competitive events in MUCs M and I areas and across some MUC L areas including some specific routes established exclusively for permitted competitive recreation use.
- Ensure that access routes necessary for recreation are provided.
- To ensure visitor services are adequate, the BLM provides four basic components including Environmental Awareness Programs (interpretation and environmental education programs that provide practical and interesting information to enhance desert recreational experiences), an Outreach Program (a public affairs information office will be established in the Los Angeles area to provide information about the desert to the public), Volunteer Program (identify projects and sites which could be appropriate for volunteer efforts), and Maps and Brochures (develop maps and brochures for the desert).
- BLM rangers and other visitor services personnel will provide information, limited vehicle assistance, emergency medical assistance, search and rescue, enforcement of federal laws and regulations, and posting of signs.
- Visitor facilities such as campgrounds, trail heads, parking loops, and visitor information kiosks may be developed but such facilities will be kept to a minimum in the desert.
- Suitability of land for recreation experience is based on its MUC:
  - MUC C: This class is suitable for nonmechanical types of recreational experience which generally involve low to very low user densities. Permanent or temporary facilities for resource protection and public health may be allowed at the discretion of authorized officer or in accordance with approved Wilderness Plans.
  - MUC L: This class is suitable for recreation which generally involves low to moderate user densities. Permanent or temporary facilities for resource protection and public health may are allowed.
  - MUC M: This class is suitable for a wide range of recreational activities which may involve moderate to high user densities. Permanent or temporary facilities for resource protection and public health may are allowed.
  - MUC I: This class is suitable for recreation activities which generally involve High user densities. Permanent or temporary facilities for resource protection and public health may are allowed.

### **West Mojave Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

Specific goals and objectives for Recreation and Visitor Services are not identified under the WEMO.

In summary, the management actions contained within the WEMO (BLM 2006) include:

- Exclude vehicle speed events from DWMA's and Mohave Ground Squirrel Conservation Area; and eliminate select races.
- Seasonal restrictions on dual sport in DWMA's.
- Motorized vehicle camping guidelines.
- Minimum impact recreation (e.g., hiking, equestrian use, bird watching, photography) allowed in all areas.

### **Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

Specific goals and objectives for Recreation and Visitor Services are not identified under the NEMO.

In summary, the management actions contained within the NEMO include (BLM 2002a):

- Eliminate the existing Barstow to Vegas racecourse within the NEMO planning area.
- Eliminate general design criteria contained in 1980 CDCA Plan MUC Guidelines because of the extreme difficulty in finding environmentally suitable opportunities in the planning area.

### **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The NECO RMP does not include goals and objectives and management actions for Recreation.

Note that in the NECO, OHV management is addressed under Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management; those management actions are listed here. The management actions for recreation include (BLM 2002b):

- Use of firearms would be permitted and regulated according to state regulations and county ordinances.
- Before a competitive OHV event in Johnson Valley to Parker corridor would be authorized an event-specific EA would be completed.
- Competitive motorized-vehicle events in which speed is the primary competitive factor would be prohibited except on approved competitive recreation routes (e.g., Johnson Valley to Parker route) and within OHV Recreation Areas.



## **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

The goals and objectives for Recreation and Visitor Services under the ISD RAMP are described on page 2-80 of the ROD (BLM 2013a) and include:

- This recreation and visitor services blueprint (based on the BLM National Recreation and Visitor Services program) for the future also sets three primary goals for the BLM recreation program:
  - Improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities on BLM-managed lands.
  - Ensure a quality experience and enjoyment of natural, biological, and cultural resources on BLM-managed lands.
  - Provide for and receive fair value in recreation.
- To meet the specific needs and changing demands of recreation visitors and changes in BLM recreation management, a BLM California-specific Recreation and Visitor Services Strategy was completed in 2008 (BLM 2008a). The strategy outlined a framework with specific goals, objectives, and actions to be implemented. The three primary goals of the document were designed to increase public land stewardship through consistent and coordinated management of the BLM California recreation program in order to achieve the best possible balance of recreational uses and land health standards statewide. The three primary goals are to:
  - Set a framework for achieving sustainable experiences and quality of life outcomes for individuals, communities, and the environment.
  - Sustain diversity, distinctive character, and capacity of BLM recreation settings.
  - Increase the economic stability and sustainability of the BLM California recreation program.
- The seven main objectives for BLM recreation management in California are to:
  1. Manage public lands for recreation experiences and quality of life.
  2. Encourage sustainable travel/tourism collaborations.
  3. Provide fair value and return through fees and commercial services.
  4. Establish a comprehensive approach to travel management.
  5. Ensure public health and safety and improve facility condition and accessibility.
  6. Enhance and expand visitor services.
  7. Encourage and sustain collaborative partnerships, volunteers, and public service.

In summary, the management actions contained within the ISD RAMP include:

- Develop or retrofit facilities to accommodate visitation and meet agency requirements.
- Design all new facilities to meet the social needs of the visitors and the management needs of the BLM.
- Provide a minimum number of recreational facilities. Those facilities should emphasize resource protection and visitor safety.
- Determine if existing facilities meet accessibility standards, management objectives, and desired future conditions. Existing facilities deemed critical will be maintained and/or modified to be accessible, to the extent possible, and safe for visitor use. Facilities not meeting management objectives and accessibility standards will be considered for removal.
- Collect recreation fees.
- Collect Special Recreation Permit fees for commercial and noncommercial activities under the authority of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (Public Law 108-447, Section 804) and other applicable regulations and BLM policy.
- Conduct a visitor survey to provide public input on safety, natural, biological, and cultural resources concerns, and management of the planning area. Implement a visitor and OHV recreation survey.
- Work cooperatively with the OHV community, the environmental community, and other local, state, and federal agencies to develop and implement interpretive and public relations programs about issues and resources related to the planning area.
- Develop and maintain educational programs which may include on-the-ground improvements such as signs and interpretative kiosks, partnerships, and educational materials throughout the planning area as funding allows.
- Provide quality informational and interpretive materials and programs to enhance the visitor's knowledge of the planning area's flora, fauna, historic, recreational, and other significant resources and opportunities. Emphasize the use of public information and education techniques to increase public awareness, enjoyment, and sensitivity to desert resources REC-14 Consider utilization of concessionaire(s) to manage certain activities and uses in the planning area within the framework of the ISD RAMP.
- Develop ways of using concessions to help maintain or operate recreation areas.
- Protect at-risk cultural and historical resources from recreational damage as needed throughout the planning area. Work together with new and existing groups to foster partnerships that accomplish BLM goals and objectives.
- Prohibit collection of wood for home heating purposes.

- Prohibit burning wood with noncombustible items (pallets).
- Maintain and/or develop volunteer campground host program in appropriate areas.
- Prohibit vending in all areas closed to OHV recreation and in limited use areas.
- Create an environment to promote the health and safety of visitors, employees, and nearby residents by working with local, state, and federal agencies and interest groups.
- Manage recreational uses to minimize user conflicts, provide a safe recreation environment, and protect desert resources.
- Engage communities, including key enthusiasts, in the resolution of health and safety issues/other conflicts at BLM recreational sites or areas.
- Improve capacity to inform visitors about safety concerns (e.g., facilities, fire), environmental conditions, and emergency situations, both on site and by using web-based and other technologies.
- Work with law enforcement officers and public affairs staff when possible to publicize vandalism and convictions.
- Maintain involvement in community-based planning to address mutual needs including communities (all local governments), service-providing businesses, and the BLM.
- Engage chamber of commerce/tourism groups, outdoor businesses, heritage organizations, outfitters, other private recreation providers, and organized groups for ideas and ways to disseminate information regarding suitable visitor destinations on public lands, maps, and user ethics.
- Develop and maintain partnerships that fulfill local needs while balancing recreational demands in administering public lands.
- Continue and enhance partnerships with other federal and state agencies, such as the Department of Defense, California State Parks, and CDFW.
- Adjust management approach to accommodate changing visitor use patterns and preferences.
- Continue working with the business community, organized recreation groups, outfitters, communities, and interested individuals to instill a sense of pride and caring for public lands.
- Expand visitor education regarding a “pack it in, pack it out” policy. Continue to educate the public regarding “Leave No Trace or Tread Lightly!” ethics.
- Use alternative funding sources (such as Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) to partner with local groups to further transportation planning.

- Allow camping and OHV recreation within the Dunebuggy Flats Campground.
- Allow camping and OHV recreation within some of the microphyll woodlands south of State Route 78 and north of Interstate 8.
- Prohibit camping within the microphyll woodlands south of Wash 33 and north of Wash 70. OHV recreation will continue to be allowed in this area.

#### **II.2.2.2.8.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

The plan decisions for Recreation and Visitor Services are outlined in Section 2.15 of the Bakersfield RMP. There are no Special Recreation Management Areas or Extensive Recreation Management Areas within the DRECP area in the Bakersfield RMP. Therefore, those decisions are not listed here.

#### **Goal**

[RVS-G-1] Support growing demand for recreation access to public lands and maintain a diversity of recreation opportunities promoting a multiple use philosophy.

#### **Objective**

[RVS-O-1] Coordinate recreation management activities through an ecosystem-based management style that considers the landscape setting and patterns of land ownership to fully realize program goals.

#### **Decisions**

[RVS-D-1] to [RVS-D-7] designate SRMAs and ERMAs outside of the DRECP LUPA area, and are not relevant to the DRECP.

[RVS-D-8] Identify 191,520 acres as lands not designated within a Recreation Management Area (Map 2.26). Close 4,110 of these acres (Map 2.34) to public access located within producing oilfields, with well densities averaging higher than 20 wells per 40 acres (or 0.5 wells per acre).

[RVS-D-9] Limit dispersed camping within the Decision Area; unless otherwise noted, to 14 days within a 90 day period. After the 14th day, campers must move beyond a 25-mile radius of their previous camp. In addition:

- Prohibit dispersed camping within 100ft of any fresh water source
- Prohibit dispersed camping within 300ft of any suitable or designated WSR categorized as wild or scenic.

- Prohibit dispersed camping within 100ft of any suitable or designated WSR categorized as recreational.

[RVS-D-10] Limit parking for dispersed camping (including cars, trucks, recreation vehicles, and trailers ["fifth wheels"]) to one vehicle width from the edge of the designated route.

[RVS-D-11] Limit Specialized Vehicle Recreation to those areas, trails, and routes designated for that purpose within the Decision Area. Through a Special Recreation Permit, this activity could be allowed on a case-by-case basis, pending the NEPA process on each application.

[RVS-D-12] Establish and identify (3,125 acres), in accordance with 43 CFR 8365.1-5(b)(2), the Wallow Rock RMZ and Horse Canyon ACEC as areas where the collection of nonrenewable resources, such as rocks, mineral specimens, comment invertebrate fossils and semi-precious gem stones is prohibited.

#### **II.2.2.2.8.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

Bishop RMP SOPs for Recreation and Visitor Services (BLM 1993, p. 14) include those pertaining to Travel Management and described in Section II.2.2.2.3; and another expressing the commitment to make suitability determinations for waterways under the Wild and Scenic River review process.

The following area-wide decisions address recreation and visitor services within the DRECP Area (p. 17):

- Manage the resource area to provide for a variety of dispersed recreation opportunities. Emphasize primitive, semi-primitive motorized, semi-primitive nonmotorized and roaded natural experiences. Maintain and enhance semi-primitive and other physical settings by providing compatible recreation opportunities within those settings. Manage visitor use to conform with semi-primitive and other physical settings. Recreation management may include developing trails for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding; providing OHV use opportunities; designating scenic byways; interpreting natural and cultural resources; and establishing an environmental education program. The Bodie Bowl and the Alabama Hills will remain designated as SRMAs.
- Manage the Alabama Hills SRMA to protect unique geologic features and scenic values and to provide compatible recreational opportunities.
- Provide campgrounds at Tuttle Creek and Goodale Creek (Owens Valley Management Area).

The following Bishop RMP decisions by management area also address recreation and visitor services within the DRECP area.

### **Owens Valley Management Area**

- Manage the Alabama Hills SRMA to enhance semi-primitive nonmotorized and roaded natural opportunities such as photography, mountain biking, hiking, four-wheel-drive touring, and horseback riding.
  - Allow camping in designated areas only.
  - Yearlong Protection of the Alabama Hills. Target resources are scenic values, geologic features, and riparian habitats.
  - Acquire up to 634 acres of private land to protect recreational and scenic values.
- Manage the remainder of the area for semi-primitive nonmotorized and motorized recreation opportunities.
- Designate Scenic Byways along Manzanar Road, Movie Flat Road and State Highway 168.

### **South Inyo Management Area**

Manage for primitive recreation opportunities in the proposed Southern Inyo Wilderness Area.

Provide for semi-primitive motorized and semi-primitive nonmotorized recreation opportunities in the remainder of the area.

- Manage the suitable portion of the Southern Inyo WSA as wilderness.
- Acquire easements for hiking access to the Long John Canyon, Pat Keyes, Union Wash, and Forgotten Pass trails.
- Yearlong Protection of the proposed wilderness. Target resources include all wilderness values.

### **Owens Lake Management Area**

- Provide direction and financial support to the Interagency Visitor Center.

#### **II.2.2.2.8.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS (BLM 2012a) amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP. Amendments to the CDCA specific to recreation include

amending land use plans with programmatic design features that would be required for all utility-scale solar energy projects on BLM-administered land including:

- Exclusions under the BLM's Solar Energy Program include developed recreational facilities, special-use permit recreation sites, and all SRMAs identified in applicable land use plans (p. 38).
- Exclusions under the BLM's Solar Energy Program include Secretarially designated National Recreation, Water, or Side and Connecting Trails and National Back Country Byways (BLM State Director-approved) identified in applicable BLM and local land use plans (available at <http://www.americantrails.org/NRTDatabase>), including any associated corridor or lands identified for protection through an applicable land use plan (p. 39).
- Exclusions under the BLM's Solar Energy Program include Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers designated by Congress, including any associated corridor or lands identified for protection through an applicable river corridor plan (p. 39).
- Project developers shall consult with the BLM early in the project planning to identify public access and recreation use areas in and adjacent to the project site and identify methods to minimize conflicts (p. 60).
- Solar facilities shall not be sited in areas designated as unique or important recreation resources (such as SRMAs), where it has been determined that a solar facility or other such development of the land would be in direct conflict with the objectives of the relevant management plan (p. 61).
- Exclusions under the BLM's Solar Energy Program include all units of the BLM NLCS, congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails (National Trails System Act, Public Law 90-543, as amended), and National Trails System Act trails recommended as suitable for designation (p. 39). Project developers shall consult with the BLM and the trail administering agency early in the project planning to help determine the proposed project's conformance with trail management prescriptions and other potential trail-related constraints (p. 127).
- Potential replacement of acreages lost for OHV use (p. 60).

### **II.2.2.2.9     *Soil, Water, and Water-Dependent Resources***

#### **II.2.2.2.9.1     California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

The CDCA Plan does not establish goals specifically for soil resources. The goals, objectives, and authorities for water resources under the CDCA Plan are described on page 117 (CDCA Water-Resources Program; BLM 1999) and include:

- Clean Water Act—The purpose of BLM implementation of this act is to prevent water-quality deterioration and to improve water quality where it has already been degraded. In addition to the act itself, further direction is given by Executive Order 12088, which instructs the federal government to comply with water-pollution control regulations, and by the 208 Water-Quality Management Report (BLM 1979).
- Safe Drinking Water Act—The purpose of complying with this act is to insure safe drinking water in accordance with applicable drinking-water standards. Executive Order 12088 instructs Federal agencies to implement the act.
- Floodplain Management—The purpose of floodplain management is the avoidance of adverse impacts resulting from the occupancy and modification of floodplains.
- Water Rights—Presidential messages of June 6 and July 12, 1978, provided the initiative for establishing certainty in regard to federal and state relations in water rights. The Department of the Interior Solicitor's Opinion No. M-36914 of June 25, 1979, was an initial step in clarifying federal and state roles. Ultimately, however, federal water rights must be identified and quantified. This will be accomplished through an inventory of existing BLM water uses and needs, in relation to existing or needed water rights. Procedures for BLM compliance with state water-right laws will be identified in BLM Manual 7154, "Water Rights," (reserved). This manual will be used in complying with acceptable State procedures to obtain water rights for Bureau management programs, wherever possible. This effort will be undertaken in close coordination with the State of California.
- Water Development—Several Bureau management programs specified in the FLPMA require the use of developed water supplies to insure the availability of water. In addition to obtaining and protecting water rights, adequate data concerning the occurrence of surface and ground water must be available to facilitate the location of developments.
- Water Storage Project—A number of water conservation projects are being investigated by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) with encouragement and support from the U.S. Water and Power Resources Service, State Resources Agency, and CSLC. These projects may include spreading facilities near the Colorado River Aqueduct and retrieval and pump-back facilities



within storage basin areas. The MWD is presently investigating two such basins for underground storage—Shavers and Hayfield. The BLM recognizes the importance of these future projects and the present uncertainty associated with the location of facilities. These facilities may be allowed on public land but will be considered on a case-by-case basis in MUCs L, M, and I with appropriate environmental assessment (i.e., EA or EIS).

In summary, the management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

### **Soil**

- Potential reclamation of motorized vehicle-use open areas such that they could be continuously used in the future and avoid spreading to new areas.
- Implement soil studies to investigate the impacts to soils from different management actions such as cattle grazing, off-road vehicles, and utility corridors. Conduct soil inventories with different levels of detail throughout the CDCA where appropriate.
- Monitor soil impacts.

### **Water and Water-Dependent Resources**

- Implement the CDCA Water Resources Program including tasks such as acquisition and protection of water rights, performing a water use and needs inventory, regional and site specific investigation of water quantity and quality, monitoring baseline water quality and impacts of activities, monitoring public drinking water, conducting floodplain delineations, impact analysis, and special studies; and non-BLM initiated projects (p. 117).
- Manage wetlands and riparian areas to avoid long-term and short-term impacts associated with destruction, loss, or degradation; preserve and enhance natural and beneficial values, and include practical measures to minimize harm in all actions.
- Manage water resources based on the MUC:
  - MUC C: These areas will be managed to maintain and enhance both surface and groundwater resources
  - MUC L: Areas designated in this class will be managed to provide for the protection and enhancement of surface and groundwater resources, except for instances of short-term degradation caused by water development projects. Best management practices, developed by the BLM during the planning process outlined in the Clean Water Act Section 208, will be used to avoid degradation and to comply with Executive Order 12088.

- MUCs M and I: Areas designated in this class will be managed to minimize degradation of water resources. Best management practices, developed by the BLM during the planning process outlined in the Clean Water Act, Section 208, will be used to keep impacts on water quality minimal and to comply with Executive Order 12088.

### **West Mojave Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The WEMO recommends the establishment of Regional Standards for Public Land Health and set forth standards to meet or exceed national policy for watersheds, ecological processes, water quality, and habitats, as well as guidelines to meet those standards (BLM 2006). These are detailed on pages 2-120 to 2-122. Until these standards and guidelines are approved by the Secretary of the Interior, these lands continue to be managed under the fallback standards specified at 43 CFR Part 4100.

### **Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for Soil, Water, and Water-Dependent Resources under the NEMO.

### **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The NECO recommends the establishment Regional Standards for Public Land Health and set forth Standards to meet or exceed National Policy for watersheds, ecological processes, water quality, and habitats, as well as guidelines to meet those standards (BLM 2002b). These are detailed on pages 2-11 through 2-13 of the NECO. Until these standards and guidelines are approved by the Secretary of the Interior, these lands continue to be managed under the fallback standards specified at 43 CFR Part 4100.

### **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

The goals and objectives for Soil Resources under the ISD RAMP are described on page 2-25 and for Water Resources on page 2-26 (BLM 2013a). These goals and objectives include:

#### ***Soil***

- Manage soils to maintain productivity and to minimize erosion.
- Preserve the natural process of dune movement and formation.
- Meet Land Health Standard No. 1, as related to soils and as described in Section 2.8.

## ***Water***

- General
  - Promote BLM activities or authorized activities that do not degrade surface or groundwater in the planning area.
  - Promote water quality to achieve or make significant progress toward achieving established BLM management objectives such as meeting wildlife needs.
  - Meet proposed Land Health Standard No. 4, as related to water quality (see Section 2.8.2).
- Surface Water
  - Identify and protect surface waters where possible.
  - Preserve and enhance the natural condition and hydrology of washes.
  - Identify area-wide use restrictions or other protective measures to meet federal, state, and local water quality requirements.
- Groundwater
  - Make groundwater, where present, available for beneficial use on public lands in coordination with the State of California and Imperial County.

The following are the management actions for Soil and Water resources:

- Minimize surface disturbance from authorized activities. Post-activity disturbed surfaces will be restored to pre-disturbance or natural conditions as applicable.
- Incorporate erosion control measures into project on a case-by-case basis.
- Prevent or reduce water quality degradation through implementation of applicable best management practices or other specific mitigation measures, when applicable.
- Continue to maintain or improve water quality in accordance with state and federal standards. Consult with the appropriate state agencies on proposed projects that may significantly affect water quality.
- Maintain authorized vehicle routes in a manner that will promote natural hydrology and protect water quality through application of best management practices.

The ISD RAMP recommends the establishment Regional Standards for Public Land Health and sets forth standards to meet or exceed National Policy for watersheds, ecological processes, water quality, and habitats, as well as guidelines to meet those standards. These are detailed on pages 2-21 to 2-23. Until these standards and guidelines are approved by

the Secretary of the Interior, these lands continue to be managed under the fallback standards specified at 43 CFR Part 4100.

#### **II.2.2.2.9.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

The Bakersfield RMP outlines plan decisions related to Soil Resources in Section 2.7, and Water Resources in Section 2.9.

### **Soil Resources**

#### ***Goal***

[SR-G-1] Soils exhibit functional biological and physical characteristics that are appropriate to soil type, climate, and land form.

#### ***Objective***

[SR-O-1] Manage soils to meet or exceed the Soil Standard of Rangeland Health (LG-D-5), as indicated by ground or plant cover, diversity of plant species, minimal evidence of accelerated wind and water erosion and the presence of the biological soil crusts where appropriate.

#### ***Decisions***

[SR-D-1] Design BLM programs and management activities and authorize projects to minimize impacts on soil productivity by implementing BMPs (Appendix 3). Specifically minimize disturbance of the following soils types:

- a. Serpentine Soils;
- b. Soils supporting “Biological Crusts” – hosting communities of cyanobacteria, mosses, lichens and liverworts;
- c. Soils highly susceptible to erosion or compaction; and
- d. Soils hosting high levels of Valley Fever spores.

### **Water Resources**

#### ***Goal***

[WR-G-1] Federal actions promulgate the objectives of the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and all other applicable water quality requirements.

## ***Objectives***

[WR-O-1] Manage water resources to meet or exceed the Standards for Rangeland Health (LG-D-5) by maintaining the existing quality and beneficial uses of water, protecting them where they are threatened, and restoring them where they are currently degraded.

[WR-O-2] Manage riparian/wetland vegetation, structure, and diversity and stream channels and floodplains so that they are functional and achieving physical and biological objectives.

## ***Decisions***

[WR-D-1] Design BLM program and management activities and authorize projects to meet water quality standards and maintain beneficial uses by implementing such measures as State approved BMPs (Management Measures for Polluted Runoff, see Appendix 3) within the Central Coast, South Coast and Tulare basins.

[WR-D-2] Implement management actions to reduce non-point source pollution contributing to impaired water quality in any basin or segment listed as impaired in accordance with Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (e.g., a segment of Salinas River).

[WR-D-3] Implement BMPs for riparian/wetland health for maintenance of vegetation cover and diversity, and the physical stability of stream banks (Appendix 3).

[WR-D-4] Applications for water developments or diversions on public lands would be approved only if resource objectives including wildlife, riparian, and livestock grazing needs, have been met.

[WR-D-5] Complete State water rights reporting requirements to maintain existing licenses and continue water diversion and use authorizations. Apply for new licenses and use authorizations as appropriate.

### **II.2.2.2.9.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

Bishop RMP SOPs for Soil, Water, and Air are described on page 13 of the ROD (BLM 1993):

In summary, the plan-wide management actions contained within the Bishop RMP include:

- Prohibit groundwater pumping where it would interfere with valid existing water uses, desired plant community goals, or other resource condition objectives.

### **II.2.2.2.9.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS (BLM 2012a) amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the

CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP. Amendments to the CDCA specific to soil and water resources include amending land use plans with programmatic design features that would be required for all utility-scale solar energy projects on BLM-administered land including (p. 62 and p. 67):

- Coordinate with BLM and other federal, state, and local agencies to assess soil erosion and minimize potential impacts.
- Solar energy development shall be sited, designed, and constructed to minimize soil erosion and geologic hazard concerns.
- Developers shall monitor compliance with conditions for soil resources and geologic hazards.
- Permanent stabilization of disturbed areas during final grading and landscaping of site and maintenance through life of facility.
- Soil erosion features for reclamation and decommissioning.
- Control project site drainage, erosion, and sedimentation related to stormwater runoff, and develop measures to prevent adverse impacts associated with soil deposition and erosion throughout and downslope of the project site. Implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
- Project developers shall conduct a hydrologic study (or studies) that demonstrate a clear understanding of the local surface water and groundwater hydrology. Developers shall coordinate with BLM and other federal, state, and local agencies to identify water use for solar energy project and secure a reliable and legally available water source.
- Project developers shall avoid and/or minimize impacts on existing surface water features, including streams, lakes, wetlands, floodplains, intermittent/ephemeral streams, and playas (any unavoidable impacts would be minimized or mitigated) and in nearby regions resulting from the development in accordance to applicable laws and regulations. Project developers shall avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on groundwater and surface water resources in accordance with laws and policies.
- Developer will monitor compliance with terms and conditions regarding water resources and consult with the BLM through operations and maintenance and decommissioning of the project.
- Maintain aquatic, riparian, and other water-dependent resources.

#### ***II.2.2.2.10 Visual Resources Management***

##### **II.2.2.2.10.1 California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

The CDCA Plan incorporates VRM goals based on the MUC Guidelines (BLM 1999).

In summary, the management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- Appropriate levels of management, protection, and rehabilitation on all public lands in the CDCA commensurate with visual resource management objectives in the MUC guidelines.
- Evaluate the extent of change created in a given landscape and specify appropriate design or mitigation measures using BLM's contract rating process.

### **West Mojave Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for VRM under the WEMO.

### **Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for VRM under the NEMO.

### **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

The NECO RMP does not include goals and objectives and management actions for visual resources.

### **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

The goals and objectives for VRM under the ISD RAMP are described on page 2-60 of the ROD (BLM 2013a) and are incorporated by reference. The ISD RAMP set VRM Classes ranging from Class I to IV, and all future projects and actions must adhere to the VRM Class objectives. These classes are described in detail on page 2-60 of the ROD. See also Map 2-2 of the ROD.

Acreages for VRM Classes within ISD Planning Area are shown in Table II.2-6.

**Table II.2-6**  
**Visual Resource Management Classes within Imperial Sand Dunes Planning Area**

<b>VRM Class</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Class I	26,000
Class II	105,000
Class III	69,000
Class IV	15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>215,000</b>

The management actions contained within the ISD RAMP includes:

- Incorporate design considerations to minimize potential impacts to public lands' visual values into all surface-disturbing activities, regardless of size. Proponents will be encouraged to meet with BLM personnel to discuss and provide input during the initial planning and design phase to minimize costly redesign and mitigation at a later time.
- Evaluate proposed surface-disturbing activities in accordance with BLM VRM Handbook H-8431-1 Visual Resource Contrast Rating. Conduct a visual contrast analysis to ensure that projects meet the VRM class requirements for that area. This visual contrast analysis from Key Observation Points will consider the following factors: distance (between project and Key Observation Points), angle of observation, length of time the proposed project would be in view, relative size or scale, season of use, light conditions, recovery time, spatial relationships, atmospheric conditions, and motion.
- Use visual resource design techniques and best management practices to mitigate the potential for short- and long-term visual impacts from other uses and activities until demonstrated to meet the VRM class objectives.
- Designate wilderness as Class I, in accordance with BLM's national policies.
- Encourage retrofitting of existing facilities to comply with the VRM Class objectives for that area by working in partnership with existing ROW holders (such as communication sites). Incorporate mitigation measures, such as repainting existing facilities, and carefully locating and designing new facilities (such as by using topographic screening) to minimize their contrast with the characteristic landscape.
- Designate ACECs as Class II or in some cases as Class III. Designate Class III and IV to areas with high potential for renewable resource uses, areas that are managed for high recreational value, and other areas which continue to be managed primarily for habitat values, regardless of scenic quality.

#### **II.2.2.2.10.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

Plan decisions regarding the Bakersfield RMP are in Section 2.8 of the Approved RMP.

#### **Goal**

[VR-G-1] Public lands demonstrate a range of visual resource values that allow for development and provide opportunities for scenic appreciation.



## Objective

[VR-O-1] Utilize visual resource management classes for all public lands within the decision area to preserve and enhance scenic quality for present and future generations.

[VR-O-2] Ensure that projects outside the CPNM boundary but within its viewshed comply with the visual resource management objectives as described in the CPNM RMP (BLM 2010b).

## Decisions

[VR-D-1] Designate VRM classes for the Decision area as shown on Map 2.13 and summarized by the following:

- a. Class I: 175,340 acres
- b. Class II: 175,132 acres
- c. Class III: 575,738 acres
- d. Class IV: 238,840 acres

### II.2.2.2.10.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan

The Bishop RMP assigned VRM Classes and corresponding VRM standards to all lands in the Field Office area, and states as an area-wide decision, “Manage all activities to conform with VRM standards. VRM standards will be applied according to Visual SOPs” (p. 17). VRM Class Objective Descriptions are provided in the RMP Appendix 3 (p. A3-1) and are incorporated by reference (BLM 1993).

The following Bishop RMP SOPs (pp. 14–15) pertain to visual resources within the DRECP area:

- Enforcement emphasis for VRM classes 2–4 will be along key observation points. Outside key observation points, the BLM will apply designated VRM class prescriptions but the Area Manager may allow development to exceed the VRM class for reasons such as technological infeasibility or low visitor use.
- The Area Manager may allow temporary projects to exceed VRM standards in class 2–4 areas, if the project will terminate within 2 years of initiation. Rehabilitation will begin at the end of the 2-year period. During the temporary project, the Area Manager may require phased mitigation to better conform with prescribed VRM standards.
- VRM classes acknowledge existing visual contrasts. Existing facilities or visual contrasts will be brought into VRM class conformance to the extent practicable

when the need or opportunity arises (i.e., ROW renewals, mineral material site closures, or route designation activity plans).

- All power lines will be constructed using non specular wire. Steel towers will be constructed of corten steel.

Area-wide decisions include utility corridor designations and state,

- Future facilities in these corridors may be allowed to exceed VRM and Yearlong Protection standards. Extensive mitigation will be required and may include, but is not limited to:
  - Painting and use of nonspecular steel materials to reduce visibility; and
  - Requiring the use of shared facilities.

Bishop RMP decisions by management area specify the locations to be managed according to the following VRM standards (for locations within the DRECP area):

#### **Owens Valley Management Area**

- VRM II — Alabama Hills SRMA, Red Mountain, and Crater Mountain
- VRM IV — Poleta Canyon and Fish Springs Hill
- VRM III — Remainder of the area

#### **South Inyo Management Area**

- VRM I — Proposed Wilderness Area
- VRM II — The foothills of the Inyo Mountains and that portion of the Inyo Range south of Swansea
- VRM III — Remainder of the area

#### **Owens Lake Management Area**

- VRM III — East of Owens Lake
- VRM IV — West of Owens Lake

#### **II.2.2.2.10.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS (BLM 2012a) amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP. Amendments to the CDCA Plan specific to visual resources

include amending land use plans with programmatic design features that would be required for all utility-scale solar energy projects on BLM-administered land including (p. 94):

- Early consultation with BLM to help determine a proposed project's potential conformance to VRM class designations and potential constraints to avoid costly unforeseen planning implications and redesign.
- Site solar facilities to minimize glint and glare and night-sky effects.
- The siting and design of solar facilities, structures, roads, and other project elements shall explore and document design considerations for reducing visual dominance in the viewshed and shall comply with the VRM class objectives.
- Project developer shall perform a preconstruction meeting with BLM to coordinate the project construction VRM mitigation strategy. Final design and construction documents will be reviewed with regard to the visual mitigation elements. The review of construction documents will include, but not be limited to, grading, drainage, revegetation, vegetation clearing, and feathering.
- Compliance for visual mitigation will be monitored by the project developer.
- Reclamation will begin immediately after construction to reduce visual impacts, in coordination with the BLM.

#### **II.2.2.2.11 *Wild Horses and Burros***

##### **II.2.2.2.11.1 California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

The goals and objectives for wild horses and burros under the CDCA Plan are described on page 51 (Wild Horse and Burro Element; BLM 1999) and include:

- Provide year-long feed, cover, and water requirements for wild horses and burros within specified areas. Feed and water requirements will be satisfied by reserving and developing sufficient forage and water to maintain biological demands for a specific number of animals. Cover or living area will be provided and preserved through Herd Management Area Plans.
- Protect wild horses and burros on public lands by conducting surveillance to prevent unauthorized removal or undue harassment of animals.
- Remove all wild horses and burros from areas not designated for retention. Remove excess wild horses and burros from designated retention areas.

In summary, the management actions contained within the CDCA Plan include:

- Protect and Manage 17 Herd Management Areas. Eliminate herds from five horse and burro areas. Prepares Herd Management Area Plans (HMAPs) for the 17 areas, grouping the areas as appropriate. HMAPs will identify objectives for the horses and burros management techniques to improve the conditions of the animals and improve the habitat requirements of food, cover, water, and living space. Preparation of the HMAPs is prioritized based on the level of resource conflicts found within the HMAPs.
- No Herd Management Areas will be established on military land. The Yuma, Arizona BLM District has the lead for implementing the Colorado River HMAP which contains the Dead Mountain, Chemehuevi, Chocolate/Mules, and Picachos Herd Management Area.
- A capture plan will be prepared whenever horses and burros are removed. If it is not possible to capture horses and burros, burros may be euthanized.
- Protection of wild horses and burros on public lands will be provided through vehicular patrols of the Desert by Desert Rangers and other BLM employees.
- A monitoring system will be designed to evaluate the effectiveness of HMAP management techniques in meeting objectives of the HMAP including estimates of population numbers, monitoring distribution and movement patterns, monitoring population dynamics, determination of seasonal diets, and monitoring vegetation. HMAP population levels may be adjusted based on monitoring.

### **West Mojave Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for Wild Horses and Burros under the WEMO.

### **Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives specifically identified for Wild Horses and Burros under the NEMO.

In summary, the management actions contained within the NEMO include (BLM 2002a):

- Eliminate the Clark Mountain Herd Management Area for wild horses and burros in the Ivanpah DWMA and adjust the Appropriate Management Level (AML) from 44 to 0 throughout the herd area to provide for recovery of the desert tortoise.
- In the Chicago Valley Herd Management Area, adjust the AML for wild horses and burros in the Amargosa watershed to reflect the current situation and prevent

future impacts from the growth of herds on listed plants. AML for wild horses would be adjusted from 28 to 12 to maintain the current herd of animals, and AML for burros would be adjusted from 28 to 0.

### **Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert/CDCA Plan Amendment**

There are no goals and objectives specifically identified for Wild Horses and Burros under the NEMO. The management actions for wild horses and burros include (BLM 2002b):

- Retaining and combining common herds and management units that are common to California and Arizona administrations, adjusting the boundaries and AMLs and designating a single BLM field office to manage the units, resolve management issues, and improve program administration.
- BLM would add historic burro range in the Chocolate Mountains-Cargo Muchacho Mountains.
- BLM would combine Chemehuevi and Havasu Herd Management Areas into a single burro herd management area and modify boundaries to reduce conflicts.
- Eliminate the Picacho Herd Management Area for horses.
- Combine historical burro range and Chocolate/Mule Mountains and Cibola-Trigo Herd Management Area and modify boundary to reduce conflicts with Picacho State Recreation Area.

### **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for Wild Horse and Burro Management under the ISD RAMP. There are no designated herd management areas or populations of wild horses and burros within the ISD RAMP area.

#### **II.2.2.2.11.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for Wild Horse and Burro Management under the Bakersfield RMP. There are no designated herd management areas or populations of wild horses and burros within the Bakersfield RMP area.

#### **II.2.2.2.11.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for Wild Horse and Burro Management under the Bishop RMP. There are no designated herd management areas or populations of wild horses and burros within the DRECP Area in the Bishop Field Office area.

#### **II.2.2.2.11.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP (BLM 2012a). Amendments to the CDCA specific to wild horses and burros include amending land use plans with programmatic design features that would be required for all utility-scale solar energy projects on BLM-administered land including (p. 57):

- Early consultation with the BLM to assess and consider options to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts on wild horses and burros and their management areas.
- Project access roads shall be sited, designed, constructed, fenced, and/or improved to minimize potential wild horse and burro collisions. Fences, or other appropriate structures, should be constructed to exclude wild horses and burros from solar energy project site facilities. Either water sources or access routes to water sources for horses and burros should be excluded from the solar energy development area, or alternate water sources or routes should be provided.

#### **II.2.2.2.12 Lands With Wilderness Characteristics**

Where a given land use plan does not address lands with wilderness characteristics, an inventory will be completed on a case-by-case basis and incorporated into the project-level NEPA document.

##### **II.2.2.2.12.1 California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as Amended**

The CDCA Plan does not address lands with wilderness characteristics outside of Wilderness Areas and WSAs.

#### **Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan**

The ISD RAMP ROD identified 42,083 acres as possessing wilderness characteristics (Wilderness Characteristic Unit [WCU] 1). The goals and objectives for lands with wilderness characteristics under the ISD RAMP are described on page 2-69 of the ROD (BLM 2013a), and are incorporated by reference.

The management actions contained within the ISD RAMP include:

- Allow motorized recreation per OHV use allocations.
- Protect resource values that are present on the lands through prescriptions of the recreation management zones for that area.
- WCU 1 will be managed under Open, Open/No Camping, and Resource Protection Recreation Management Zones.

- WCU 1 is unavailable for solar and wind energy development.
- WCU 1 is not available for mineral leasing, mineral material sales, or free use permits.
- Lands within WCU 1 are to be retained and are not available for disposal (sale or exchange).

#### **II.2.2.2.12.2 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan**

Plan decisions regarding lands with wilderness character are in Section 2.5 of the Bakersfield RMP. There are no lands managed for wilderness character within the DRECP LUPA Decision Area in the Bakersfield Field Office.

#### **II.2.2.2.12.3 Bishop Resource Management Plan**

There are no goals and objectives or management actions specifically identified for lands with wilderness characteristics under the Bishop RMP.

#### **II.2.2.2.12.4 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

The 2012 ROD for the Solar PEIS amended land use allocation decisions and utility-scale transmission decisions within 89 plans in 6 southwestern states, including the CDCA Plan, and the Bishop RMP (BLM 2012a).

The following design features are identified in the Solar PEIS ROD to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate potential impacts on specially designated areas and lands with wilderness characteristics from solar energy development:

- Protection of existing values of specially designated areas and lands with wilderness characteristics shall be evaluated during the environmental analysis for solar energy projects, and the results shall be incorporated into the project planning and design.
  - Assessing potential impacts on specially designated areas and lands with wilderness characteristics shall include, but is not limited to, the following:
    - Identifying specially designated areas and lands with wilderness characteristics in proximity to the proposed projects. In coordination with the BLM, developers shall consult existing land use plans and updated inventories.
    - Identifying lands that are within the geographic scope of a proposed solar energy project that have not been recently inventoried for wilderness characteristics or any lands that have been identified in a citizen's wilderness proposal in order to determine whether they possess wilderness characteristics. Developers shall consider including the wilderness characteristics evaluation as part of the processing of a solar energy ROW

application for those lands without a recent wilderness characteristics inventory. All work must be completed in accordance with current BLM policies and procedures.

- Evaluating impacts on specially designated areas and lands with wilderness characteristics as part of the environmental impact analysis for the project and considering options to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate adverse impacts in coordination with the BLM.
- Methods to mitigate unavoidable impacts on specially designated areas and lands with wilderness characteristics may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Acquiring wilderness inholdings from willing sellers.
  - Acquiring private lands from willing sellers adjacent to designated wilderness.
  - Acquiring private lands from willing sellers within proposed wilderness or WSAs.
  - Acquiring other lands containing important wilderness or related values, such as opportunities for solitude or a primitive, unconfined (type of) recreation.
  - Restoring wilderness, for example, modifying routes or other structures that detract from wilderness character.
  - Contributing mitigation monies to a “wilderness mitigation bank,” if one exists, to fund activities such as the ones described above.
  - Enacting management to protect lands with wilderness characteristics in the same field office or region that are not currently being managed to protect wilderness character. Areas that are to be managed to protect wilderness characteristics under this approach must be of sufficient size to be manageable, which could also include areas adjacent to current WSAs or adjacent to areas currently being managed to protect wilderness characteristics.
- Solar facilities shall be sited, designed, and constructed to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts on the values of specially designated areas and lands with wilderness characteristics.

## **II.2.3 Renewable Energy and Transmission Development Under the No Action Alternative**

This section provides a description of the anticipated distribution, magnitude, and scope of activities associated with the construction and operation of renewable energy generation under the No Action Alternative. Development is currently allowed within the planning area, and the No Action Alternative assumes that renewable energy goals in support of greenhouse gas reduction targets in the desert region will be achieved. It further assumes



that the contribution of the DRECP Plan Area to these goals under the No Action Alternative would be similar to the Preferred Alternative and other alternatives.

This section is subdivided by technology: solar, wind, geothermal, and transmission. The renewable energy development activities that would take place under the No Action Alternative are identical to development activities on the list of renewable energy and transmission development activities included in the Preferred Alternative, a detailed description of which is provided in Section II.3.3.1, although the location of those activities would vary from what would occur under the action alternatives.

In the No Action Alternative, renewable energy-related activities are assumed to be feasible on open, nonmilitary lands that are not currently protected or where such development is not prohibited; these areas are disbursed throughout the DRECP Plan Area (Figure II.2-1). However, the distribution of different generation technologies varies depending on underlying factors that affect each technology. Therefore, for the purpose of analysis, the future technology mix and spatial distribution was assumed to be similar to current development patterns at the ecoregion scale. To approximate future distribution patterns, the distribution of existing projects that are either operational, under construction, or approved or under environmental review was used as a proxy for estimating the spatial distribution of renewable energy development under the No Action Alternative. It should be noted that, as a consequence of projecting future development from the distribution of existing projects, some ecoregions were not assigned generation impacts.

Table II.2-7 summarizes the potential acreage of areas available for renewable energy and transmission development under the No Action Alternative by county on BLM-administered land. Most of this acreage is in San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

**Table II.2-7**  
**Areas Available for Potential Development under**  
**the No Action Alternative by Technology Type and by County**

<b>Areas Available by Renewable Energy Technology by County</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
<i>Imperial County</i>	<i>324,000</i>
Geothermal	10,000
Geothermal and wind	1,000
Solar	174,000
Solar and geothermal	62,000
Solar and wind	34,000
Solar, geothermal, and wind	5,000
Wind	38,000
<i>Inyo County</i>	<i>203,000</i>
Solar	77,000

**Table II.2-7**  
**Areas Available for Potential Development under**  
**the No Action Alternative by Technology Type and by County**

<b>Areas Available by Renewable Energy Technology by County</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Solar and wind	75,000
Wind	51,000
<i>Kern County</i>	<i>208,000</i>
Solar	6,000
Solar and wind	22,000
Wind	180,000
<i>Los Angeles County</i>	<i>6,000</i>
Solar and wind	1,000
Wind	5,000
<i>Riverside County</i>	<i>721,000</i>
Solar	73,000
Solar and wind	346,000
Wind	302,000
<i>San Bernardino County</i>	<i>1,342,000</i>
Geothermal and wind	500
Solar	61,000
Solar and wind	254,000
Wind	1,027,000
<i>San Diego County</i>	<i>20</i>
Solar	10
Solar and wind	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,804,000</b>

**Notes:** Includes only BLM-administered lands within the DRECP area. Excludes existing protected areas, military, tribal, and subareas or subunits where megawatts were not assigned under the No Action Alternative. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

The following sections describe the anticipated distribution of generation that could occur under the No Action Alternative, and estimate the total project area and the area of permanent disturbance for each technology, a summary of which is provided in Table II.2-8.

**Table II.2-8**  
**Summary of Anticipated Long-Term Disturbance and Project**  
**Area Acreage for All Renewable Generation Technologies under No Action**

<b>Renewable Generation Technology</b>	<b>Estimated Long-Term Disturbance (Acres)</b>	<b>Total Project Area (Acres)</b>
Solar	59,000	59,000
Wind	3,000	52,000
Geothermal	400	400
Distributed generation	3,000	3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>65,000</b>	<b>114,000</b>

**Notes:** The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

### **II.2.3.1 Solar Energy Generation**

This section provides an estimate of the area of impacts for activities associated with solar projects in the absence of the DRECP. Construction and operational activities are identical to those described for the Preferred Alternative in Section II.3.3.1.1 and listed in Table II.3-6.

As with other alternatives, the No Action Alternative was analyzed at a programmatic level. Extensive detailed analysis of effects that are project-specific (i.e., geographically site-specific) is infeasible. Consequently, the magnitudes of impacts are described in terms of the acreage that would be affected by activities within different ecoregion subareas of the DRECP Plan Area (Table II.2-9). It was assumed that solar development would occur within the subset of ecoregions identified in Figure II.2-1.

When estimating the impacts of solar projects it was assumed that the construction of projects would result in the loss of all habitat within the boundary of the project footprint. Two reasons are given for this: (1) Unlike other technologies, solar projects are generally fenced to exclude wildlife and result in modification to natural processes for the life of the project; and (2) although some vegetation may be preserved at some project locations, this is not universal and conditions of service often lead to the removal of vegetation to reduce fire risk. Further, the extensive removal, modification, and grading within the project boundary, even if vegetation is not completely removed, may lead to edge effects that effectively modify the remaining vegetation communities. Therefore, the acreage requirements for roads, operation and maintenance facilities, and switchyards required for each facility are included in the overall estimated boundary of the solar project. Similarly, short-term impacts, such as construction and laydown yards, were assumed to be within

the final boundary of the project and therefore subsumed within the boundary estimate. Table II.2-9 summarizes the long-term impacts for solar technologies and provides the following information by ecoregions:

- **Total Long-Term Ground Disturbance** – Estimated total acreage affected by solar development activities such as vegetation clearance, grading, and construction. This is effectively a summation of all potential solar generation facility footprints. Operations and maintenance buildings, switchyards, road construction, and all ancillary facilities were assumed to be within the boundary of the DRECP Plan Area and result in long-term disturbance to the entire project site. Due to the difficulty of restoration in a desert environment, all activities that result in vegetation removal or disturbance were considered long term for the purpose of analysis. However, all temporarily impacted areas would be subject to restoration plans, therefore, considering them long-term disturbance is a conservative approach.
- **Total Project Area** – An estimate of the total area occupied by a given project. For area-intensive technologies like solar generation, the total project area is identical to the total long-term ground disturbance.

**Table II.2-9**  
**Distribution of Long-Term Disturbance and Project Area Acreages Associated with**  
**Solar and Distributed Generation Across DRECP Ecoregion Subareas**  
**Under the No Action Alternative**

<b>Ecoregion Subarea</b>	<b>Long-Term Disturbance and Project Area</b>
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	29,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	5,000
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	13,000
Mojave and Silurian Valley	—
Owens River Valley	—
Panamint Death Valley	—
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	500
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	—
Providence and Bullion Mountains	10,000
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,000</b>

**Notes:** The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

### II.2.3.2 Wind Energy Generation

This section provides an estimate of the size of impacts for potential activities associated with wind projects in the absence of the DRECP. Construction and operational activities are identical to those described for the Preferred Alternative in Section II.3.3.1.2 and listed in Table II.3-8.

As with other alternatives, the No Action Alternative was analyzed at a programmatic level. The magnitudes of impacts are described in terms of the acreage that would be affected by activities within different ecoregion subareas of the DRECP Plan Area (Table II.2-10). It was assumed that wind development would occur within the subset of regions identified in Figure II.2-1.

Extensive detailed analysis of effects that are project-specific (i.e., geographically site-specific) is infeasible. Consequently, the magnitudes of impacts are described in terms of the acreage that would be affected by activities within different ecoregion subareas of the DRECP Plan Area. Wind projects result in relatively diffuse impacts spread across a wide area. Turbines are widely spaced and connected by permanent access roads and transmission infrastructure, with centralized maintenance facilities and switchyards. Unlike solar, all the land within the boundary of a wind project was not assumed to be permanently disturbed by project activities. For the purpose of analysis, estimates of disturbed areas were the sum of the estimated acreage required for turbine pads, roads, ancillary facilities, and supporting infrastructure. Short-term construction activities, such as laydown yards, were assumed to result in long-term disturbance within the project boundary. In addition to estimates of ground disturbance, the area likely to be impacted by the operation of the turbine rotors (airspace) was also estimated. For analysis purposes, turbines were grouped into conceptual projects of up to 200 megawatts (MWs) to enable an estimation of impacts from ancillary facilities, roads, turbines etc. Table II.2-10 summarizes the long-term impacts assumed for wind technologies, and provides the following information by ecoregion subarea:

- **Total Project Area** – An estimate of the total area occupied by a given project. For technologies where the impacts may be spread across a greater area (e.g., wind energy generation), the long-term impacts are distributed over a larger area.
- **Estimated Long-Term Ground Disturbance** – Estimated total acreage affected by wind energy activities described above. This is effectively a summation of all potential wind generation facility footprints, including individual turbine pad, operations and maintenance building, switchyard, and road construction impacts. This estimate also includes the additional impacts that would occur as a consequence of construction activities including construction areas, laydown yards, and storage facilities. Due to the difficulty of restoration in a desert environment, all activities that result in vegetation removal or disturbance were considered long

term for the purpose of analysis. However, all temporarily impacted areas would be subject to restoration plans; therefore, considering them long-term disturbance is a conservative approach.

- Turbine Rotor Swept Area – An estimate of the total aerial acreage affected by the rotation of turbine blades while a wind facility is operating.

**Table II.2-10**  
**Potential Distribution of Long-Term Disturbance, Rotor Swept Area, and**  
**Project Area Acreages Associated with Wind Generation Across DRECP**  
**Ecoregion Subareas Under the No Action Alternative**

<b>Ecoregion Subarea</b>	<b>Project Area</b>	<b>Long-Term Disturbance</b>	<b>Rotor Swept Area</b>
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	—	—	—
Imperial Borrego Valley	10,000	500	200
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	—	—	—
Mojave and Silurian Valley	—	—	—
Owens River Valley	—	—	—
Panamint Death Valley	—	—	—
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	3,000	200	100
Piute Valley, Sacramento Mountains	—	—	—
Providence and Bullion Mountains	—	—	—
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	39,000	2,000	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,000</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>

**Notes:** The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

### **II.2.3.3 Geothermal Energy Generation**

This section provides an estimate of the size of impacts for potential activities associated with geothermal projects under the No Action Alternative by the DRECP. Construction and operational activities are identical to those described for the Preferred Alternative in Section II.3.3.1.3 and listed in Table II.3-10.

The area available to geothermal development was limited to portions of areas in the Imperial Borrego Valley and part of the Owens River Valley ecoregion subareas, where geothermal resources are concentrated. Geothermal projects are more limited in size (in the DRECP Plan Area) than other renewable energy projects. Recent projects vary from about 50 MW to 160 MW in size. For analysis under the No Action Alternative, potential geothermal projects were assumed be typically 50 MW in size. Extensive detailed analysis

of potential effects that are project-specific (i.e., geographically site-specific) is infeasible. Consequently, the magnitudes of impacts are described in terms of the estimated acreage that would be affected by activities within different ecoregion subareas of the DRECP Plan Area. It was assumed that geothermal development would occur within the subset of regions identified in Figure II.2-1.

- Geothermal projects result in extensive impacts associated with the power block and ancillary facilities, with more dispersed impacts resulting from the well fields. Wellheads that inject and collect heat transfer fluids are widely spaced and connected by permanent access roads and pipelines to the centrally located power block and steam turbine facilities. All land within the boundary of a geothermal project was assumed permanently disturbed by project activities. Estimates of disturbed acreage include the acreage required for wellhead pads, roads, ancillary facilities, and supporting infrastructure, and also includes the land fragmented by the roads, pipelines and well pads in the well-field, which was assumed to retain no conservation value. Short-term construction activities, such as laydown yards, were assumed to result in permanent disturbance within the project boundary, and are also included in the estimate of permanently disturbed acreage. Table II.2-11 summarizes the long-term impacts for geothermal technologies and provides the following information by ecoregion subarea: Estimated Long-Term Ground Disturbance – Estimated total acreage affected by geothermal development activities such as vegetation clearance, grading, and construction. This is effectively a summation of all potential geothermal energy generation facility footprints, including operations and maintenance building, switchyard, and road construction impacts, plus the additional impacts that occur as a consequence of construction activities, , and the fragmented land within the well-field. Due to the difficulty of restoration in an arid environment, all activities that result in vegetation removal or disturbance were considered long term for the purpose of analysis. However, all temporarily impacted areas would be subject to Restoration Plans, therefore, considering them permanent disturbance is a conservative approach.
- Total Project Area – An estimate of the total area occupied by a given project. For technologies where the impacts may be spread across a greater area (e.g., geothermal energy generation), the long-term impacts are distributed over a larger area.

**Table II.2-11**  
**Potential Distribution of Long-Term Disturbance**  
**and Project Area Acreages Associated with Geothermal Generation**  
**Across DRECP Ecoregion Subareas Under the No Action Alternative**

<b>Ecoregion Subarea</b>	<b>Long-Term Disturbance and Project Area</b>
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	—
Imperial Borrego Valley	400
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	—
Mojave and Silurian Valley	—
Owens River Valley	—
Panamint Death Valley	—
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	—
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	—
Providence and Bullion Mountains	—
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>

**Notes:** The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

### **II.2.3.4 Transmission**

The transmission components for the No Action Alternative would be the same as those described for the Preferred Alternative in Section II.3.3.1.4, although the location of transmission facilities would vary from the Preferred Alternative since distribution of new generating facilities would be different.

- **Estimated Long-Term Ground Disturbance** – Estimated total acreage affected by activities such as vegetation clearance, grading, and construction. This is effectively a summation of transmission impacts. This estimate also includes impacts that occur as a consequence of construction activities, including construction areas, laydown yards, and storage facilities. Due to the difficulty of restoration in a desert environment, all activities that result in vegetation removal or disturbance were considered long term for the purpose of analysis.
- **Total Project Area** – An estimate of the total area occupied by a given project including the full width of the right-of-way (ROW) (see Table II.2-12). For technologies where the impacts may be spread across a greater area, the permanent impacts are distributed over a larger area.



**Table II.2-12**  
**Right-of-Way Requirements for Transmission Associated**  
**with Renewable Energy Development in the No Action Alternative**

<b>Ecoregion Subarea</b>	<b>Long-Term Disturbance and Project Area</b>
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	14,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	12,000
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	—
Mojave and Silurian Valley	2,000
Owens River Valley	—
Panamint Death Valley	—
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	600
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	—
Providence and Bullion Mountains	1,000
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,000</b>

**Source:** See Appendix K, Transmission Technical Group Report.

**Notes:** Includes acreage on BLM and non-BLM lands. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

#### **II.2.3.4.1    *Transmission Outside the DRECP***

As with other alternatives, the No Action Alternative would result in transmission development outside the DRECP area. The potential direct effects of potential future transmission outside the DRECP area associated with development of renewable energy projects and transmission facilities inside the DRECP area are, however, programmatically described and analyzed in Volume IV, Environmental Consequences/Effects Analysis, of the DRECP for each environmental resource category. This section presents a description of the transmission facilities outside the DRECP Plan Area that are programmatically analyzed in Volume IV.

The assumptions used to calculate acreages of effects for transmission and substation facilities in the DRECP are the same as those used to calculate effects of transmission and substations outside the DRECP, and are described in Section II.3.3.1.4. However, approval of the DRECP would not result in any approval of the potential future transmission lines outside the DRECP area that are discussed here. All future transmission lines outside the DRECP area would require new applications by the developer or utility, compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and NEPA as appropriate, and approvals from the developer (if municipal utilities or irrigation districts) or from the California Public Utilities Commission (if investor-owned utilities) prior to construction.

Table II.2-13 provides the acreage of effects for transmission and substations outside of the DRECP boundary. For ease of analysis, the transmission lines and substations have been clustered into general geographic boundaries.

**Table II.2-13**  
**Right-of-Way Requirements for Transmission Outside the DRECP**  
**Area Associated with Renewable Energy Development – No Action Alternative**

Geographic Area	Transmission	
	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Miles</i>
San Diego	2,000	94
Los Angeles	2,000	83
Central Valley	15,000	274
Rialto/Moreno Valley/Devers	12,000	484
<b>Total Outside DRECP Area</b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>935</b>

**Source:** See Appendix K, Transmission Technical Group Report.

**Notes:** The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

The potential new transmission lines outside the DRECP Plan Area are listed below.

- **San Diego Area:** One 500-kilovolt (kV) line from the Imperial Valley Substation to the existing Sycamore Substation (San Diego).
- **Los Angeles Area:**
  - One 500 kV line from the existing Vincent Substation (just inside the DRECP boundary) to the existing Lighthipe Substation.
  - One 500 kV line from the existing Vincent Substation (just inside the DRECP boundary) to the existing Mesa Substation.
  - One 500 kV line Mead, Station 6 to Station 7.
- **Central Valley:**
  - One 500 kV transmission line from the Whirlwind Substation (just inside the DRECP boundary) to the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Midway 500 kV Substation.
  - Two 500 kV lines from the PG&E Midway Substation to the Tesla/Tracy Substation.
- **Rialto/Moreno Valley/Devers Area:**
  - One 500 kV line from the Devers to Vincent Substation.
  - One 500 kV line from Devers to Rancho Vista Substation.

- One 500 kV line from Colorado River Substation to existing Valley Substation. About 103 miles of this line would be outside the DRECP boundary.
- Three 500 kV lines from Midway X (Imperial Valley) to Devers Substation. About 220 miles of this corridor would be outside the DRECP boundary.

### **II.2.3.5 BLM Renewable Energy Policies**

#### **II.2.3.5.1 *Solar***

Under the No Action Alternative, solar energy development on BLM-administered land would be directed by the Solar PEIS ROD (see Figure II.2-3). The Solar PEIS ROD (October 2012; BLM 2012a) amended BLM plans in six southwestern states, including California, and created a comprehensive set of updated and revised policies and procedures. The BLM California land use plans that were amended by the Solar PEIS ROD (BLM 2012a) include the CDCA Plan and the Bishop RMP.

The Solar PEIS ROD established categories of lands to be excluded from utility scale solar development and identified specific locations well suited for utility scale production of solar energy, called Solar Energy Zones (SEZs). The ROD also allowed for responsible solar energy development in variance areas outside of SEZs in accordance with the newly established variance process, and established programmatic design features for utility scale solar energy development on BLM lands (BLM 2012a).

The Solar PEIS ROD established two SEZs in the DRECP Plan Area—Riverside East and Imperial East. A third SEZ was established through the West Chocolate Mountains Renewable Energy Evaluation Area ROD (August 2013). These three SEZs total approximately 164,000 acres. In addition, approximately 577,000 acres of VPLs are in the DRECP Plan Area. The remaining BLM lands in the DRECP Plan Area are excluded from utility-scale solar development, and would not be developed under the No Action Alternative. BLM Solar Energy Program policies can be found in Appendix B of the Solar PEIS ROD (BLM 2012a), starting on page 146.

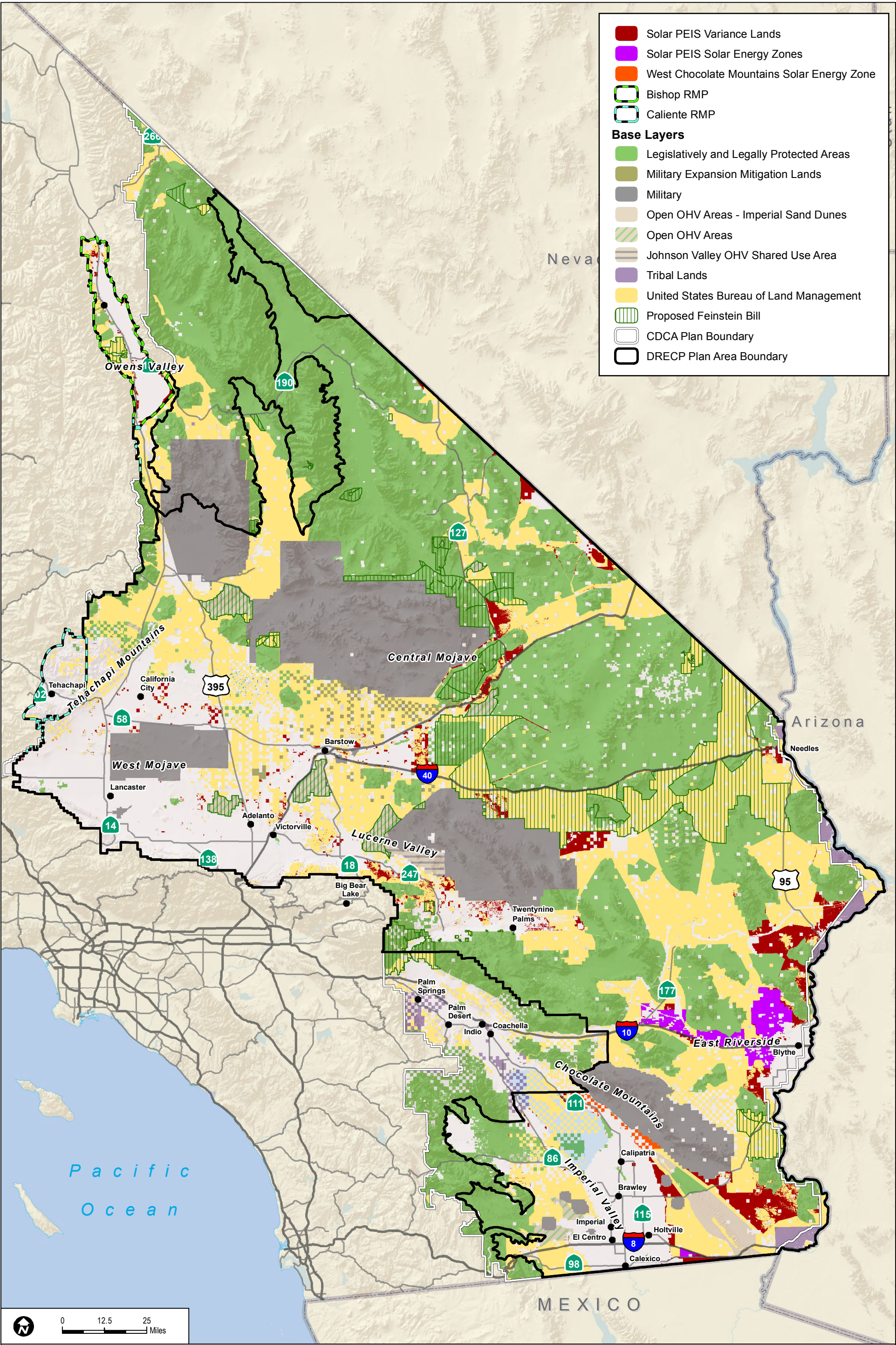
As of November 2013, 13 first-in-line solar ROW applications in the DRECP Plan Area are considered “pending applications” by the Solar PEIS and are not subject to any of the decisions of the Solar PEIS ROD. These applications, covering approximately 82,808 acres, could continue to be processed under the No Action Alternative, regardless of their location in exclusion, variance, or SEZ lands. More information on pending applications may be found in Appendix B of the Solar PEIS ROD, Section B.1.2 (BLM 2012a).

### **II.2.3.5.2     *Wind***

The Wind Energy Development Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Wind PEIS) ROD (BLM 2005) established policies, best management practices, and minimum mitigation requirements for wind development on BLM land; these policies, practices, and mitigation requirements were revised through BLM Instruction Memorandum 2009-043 (BLM 2008b). However, the Wind PEIS did not amend BLM plans in the DRECP Plan Area. Thus, under the No Action Alternative, wind energy development within the DRECP Plan Area would be dictated by the CDCA Plan as amended, Bishop RMP, and Bakersfield RMP.

The CDCA Plan allows wind energy generation facilities to be considered in Multiple Use Class (MUC) L (limited use), M (moderate use), and I (intensive use) lands if the project site is identified in the plan (which may require a plan amendment) and when NEPA requirements are met. Sites not identified must be considered through a Plan Amendment process. No wind energy is allowed in MUC C (controlled) lands. The Bakersfield RMP identifies areas available for wind energy, areas excluded from wind energy development, and avoidance areas for wind energy development. The Bishop RMP does not address wind energy. Thus, under the No Action Alternative, wind energy ROW applications would continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis in MUCs L, M, and I lands in the CDCA, areas available for wind energy in lands covered by the Bakersfield RMP, and in lands covered by the Bishop RMP within the DRECP Plan Area. If wind energy is proposed in the Bishop planning area, the BLM would evaluate the application on a case-by-case basis to determine if it could be developed consistent with the goals and objectives for the application area. This would amount to approximately 6,719,000 acres within the CDCA, and approximately 116,000 acres in the Bishop and Bakersfield planning areas.





Sources: ESRI (2015); CEC (2013); BLM (2015); CDFW (2013); USFWS (2013)

**FIGURE II.2-3**  
**Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Designations**



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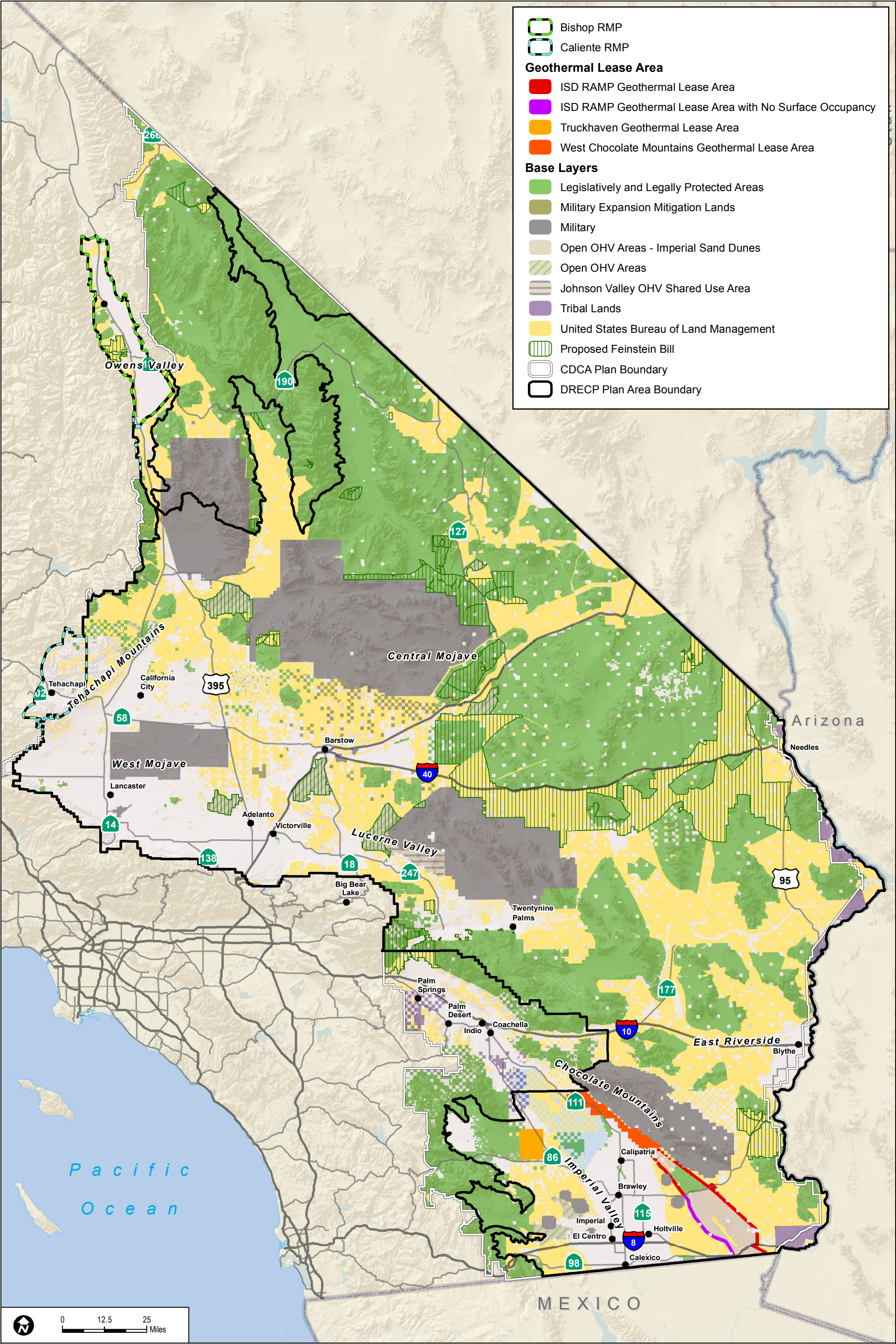
### ***II.2.3.5.3 Geothermal***

The ROD for the PEIS for Geothermal Leasing in the Western United States (Geothermal PEIS) (December 2008; BLM 2008c) evaluated various alternatives for allocating lands as being closed or available for leasing and analyzes standard and special stipulations to protect sensitive resources. The document describes the proposed amendments for 122 BLM-administered RMPs to adopt the allocations, stipulations, procedures, and best management practices analyzed in the Geothermal PEIS. The Geothermal PEIS provides site-specific analysis for 19 pending geothermal lease applications for lands within 7 geographical areas that were filed prior to January 1, 2005, including two lease parcels located within the West Chocolate Mountains Renewable Energy Evaluation Area (WCM REEA). The Geothermal PEIS ROD did not amend any BLM plans within the DRECP Plan Area (BLM 2008c). Under the No Action Alternative, geothermal energy development located within the DRECP Plan Area would be allowed as analyzed under the Final EIS and ROD for the Truckhaven Geothermal Leasing Area (BLM 2008d), the Final EIS and ROD for the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan (ISD RAMP) (BLM 2013a), and the Final EIS and ROD for the WCM REEA (BLM 2013b) (see Figure II.2-4).

Competitive geothermal lease nominations would also be considered on a case-by-case basis in MUCs L, M, and I lands in the CDCA if the site is identified in the plan (this may require a plan amendment).

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Sources: ESRI (2015); CEC (2013); BLM (2015); CDFW (2013); USFWS (2013)

FIGURE II.2-4

Geothermal Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Areas Available for Leasing



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